



Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi



I contemplate on that All-Merciful Sri Sai Baba whose grace makes the dumb speak and the lame cross mountains. What you sow, you reap; what you give, you get.

SWAMI KESAVAI AHJI,
Shenoy Nagar, Madras.

V. V. GIRI

Phone 4127

" GIRIJA
1, THIRD BLOCK, JAYANAGAR,
BANGALORE-560011

February 24, 1975.

Dear Swami Kesavaiahji,

I am glad to hear from your communication dated 19th February, 1975, that the opening ceremony of the newly built Mandir of Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam will take place on 14th March, 1975, and that the Hon'ble Shri C. Brahmananda Reddy and the Hon'ble Shri C. Subramaniam will both be associated with this function.

I know the excellent work that the Samajam has been doing during the past fifteen years under your inspiring guidance and direction, to spread the great spiritual message of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. This new building will serve the purpose in even a fuller measure and I am sure it will become a centre of pilgrimage to which devotees from all parts of the country will be attracted to receive inspiration for a good and godly life. I know the high ideals and ambitions you have set before yourself and I hope by God's grace and your own qualities of head and heart all your expectations will be fulfilled.

I wish the inauguration ceremony all success.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) V. V. GIRI

**RAJ BHAVAN
Madras-600 022,
February 25, 1975.**

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the festivities connected with the opening of the shrine of Sai Baba will be held on the 14th and 15th March 1975 at Shenoy Nagar. I wish the function every success.

**(Sd.) K. K. SHAH
Governor of Tamilnadu**

**RAJ BHAVAN
BANGALORE**

28th February, 1975.

MESSAGE

I am very happy to know that a shrine for Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi has been completed in Shenoyanagar, Madras, will be opened on the 14th of March.

The Saint of Shirdi has proved to be a source of solace, inspiration and guidance, to countless number of people in this present century. It is fitting that his devotees should have put up the shrine for him, I am sure that it will bring people closer to this great saint. I send my good wishes for the success of the occasion.

**(Sd.) MOHANLAL SUKHADIA
Governor of Karnataka**

VIDHANA SOUDHA,
BANGALORE-1,

February, 1975.

MESSAGE

Sri Sai Baba, the Saint of Shirdi, is a perennial source of inspiration and solace to millions of people. I am happy that a shrine consecrated to the Saint, whose life and teachings have so profoundly influenced so many people, has been completed through the devoted labours of the Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam, Madras, and that the Union Home Minister, Shri K. Brahmananda Reddy, and the Union Finance Minister, Shri C. Subramaniam, are participating in the festivities connected with the opening of the shrine.

On this auspicious occasion, I have much pleasure in extending my greetings and felicitations to the Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam and wishing the function all success.

(Sd.) D. DEVARAJ URS
Chief Minister

Phone - 71243

15, WARREN ROAD,
MYLAPORE,
MADRAS-4.

February 26, 1975

Dear Shri Uttam Reddi,

I am glad to hear from you about the ensuing celebration of the Sai Samajam on the 14th and 15th March. I know the sense of devotion with which you and your colleagues have been managing the Sai Samajam.

I wish the celebration every success.

Yours Sincerely,

(Sd.) M. BHAKTAVATSALAM

அருள் மிகு வடபழநி ஆண்டவர் திருக்கோயில்

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திருமுருகன் தலங்களுள் தொன்மை வாய்ந்த தென் பழநியில் பழநியாண்டியாகவும், சென்னை, வடபழநியில் வேண்டுமேவார்க்கு வேண்டும் வரமளித்துக்கொண்டு கலியுக வரதனாய் எழுந்தருளியிருப்பவர் வடபழநி ஆண்டவர். வடபழநி ஆண்டவனுக்கு வைகாசியில் விசாகப் பெருவிழா, கந்தசஷ்டிப் பெருவிழா, பங்குனி உத்திரப் பெருவிழா முதலியவை இவ் வாலயத்தின் முக்கிய விழாக்களாகும். கந்தசஷ்டி, பங்குனி உத்திர பெருவிழாக்களில் இலட்சார்ச்சனைகள் மிக விமரிசையாக நடைபெறும். மாதாந்திர கிருத்திகைக்கும், ஆடி, கார்த்திகை மற்றும் தை மாதங்களில் விசேஷ கிருத்திகைக்கும், பெரு வாரியான பக்தர்கள் தரிசனத்திற்காக வருகிறார்கள். பிரதி தினமும் ஆண்டவனுக்கு சந்தனக்காப்பு, விபூதிபஞ்சாமிர்த அபிஷேகம், பால் அபிஷேகம் முறையே ரூ. 151/-, ரூ. 51/-, ரூ. 21/- கட்டணங்களில் செய்யப்படுகின்றன. திருமணங்கள் அதிக அளவில் நடைபெறுகின்றன. திருப்பணி வேலைகள் நடைபெற்று வருகின்றன. திருப்பணிக்கு நிதி உதவி அளிப்பவர்கள் “நிர்வாக அதிகாரி” முகவரிக்கு அனுப்பி வடபழநி ஆண்டவர் அருளுக்கு பாத்திரமாகுமாறு கேட்டுக் கொள்கின்றோம்.

ஐ. ஆறுமுகம், பி. ஏ., பி. எல்.,
நிர்வாக அதிகாரி.

திரு. ஏ. எல். இராமன், அறங்காவலர் குழுத்தலைவர்.

திரு. வி. பாலகிருஷ்ணன்

திரு. எச். இராஜரத்தினம்

திரு. செ. கண்ணப்பன்

திருமதி. ஜோதி வெங்கடாசலம்

} அறங்காவலர்கள்

K. VEERASWAMI
Chief Justice

High Court Buildings
MADRAS-600001.

March 2, 1975.

Dear Mr. Uttama Reddi,

I am so glad to know that an edifice befitting the great Saint of Shirdi has been constructed and is about to be opened on the 14th. I send my best wishes for the success of the function.

Yours Sincerely,
(Sd. K VEERASWAMI)

With the best compliments from



C. R. Balachandran

Madras

SAI RAM

Sri SAI BABA AND HIS TEACHINGS

Sri Swami Kesavaiahji

(Founder-President, Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam)

The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. India is the heart of the spiritual world. From time immemorial, wave after wave of spiritual influence has been flowing from India to the distant out posts of civilization. The centre and origin of these spiritual forces have been the great teachers of spirituality in India, whose number is legion. They are the manifestations of the same infinite God. One of their great incarnations, Lord Sri Krishna has said:— "Though I am unborn, and verily the over-Lord, yet I come into being whenever virtue subsides and vice dominates for the protection of the good, destruction of the wicked and establishment of *Dharma*. One of the latest of such divine incarnations is Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. He is the most recent in our memory in the hierarchy of the teachers of spirituality.

Very little is known about Sri Sai Baba's early life. By the time Baba arrived at Shirdi, a hamlet in the district of Ahmednagar, he had developed great spirituality, wonderful healing powers and a prophetic vision. His residence was, at first, under the shade of a neem tree, wherefrom he moved to a small, dilapidated Masjid which he named *Dwaraka Mayi* in which he continued till he attained *Mahasamadhi*. Utterly unmindful of the morrow, disregarding all personal comforts and leading a life of celibacy, he led the life of a real *Sanyasin*. He alleviated human sufferings at first with medicines. Afterwards he gave it up and gave *Udhi* taken out from the sacred fire kept burning even today in *Dwaraka Mayi*. As to his

humility it will be evident from the fact that he himself begged food daily and was clad in a shabby long robe. The devotees derived immense benefit by his divine touch and cleansed of all their sins even by his mere glance. Sri Sai Baba was a repository of goodness, kindness and love to one and all without any distinction.

A unique feature of Sri Baba's teaching is its simplicity. He did not prescribe difficult *sadhanas* but asked his devotees to utter God's name with great devotion and put sole, trust and implicit faith in Him and His Grace. In a silent mysterious way, Baba not only solved their problems but also effected a spiritual transformation in them. Baba often emphasised the virtues of kindness to fellowmen and creatures, truthfulness and humility.

The message of Sri Sai Baba has an appropriateness in the present context of human affairs. Spirituality is now at its low ebb and materialism is showing its head in all spheres of human activity. Instead of concentrating on the Supreme, we waste our precious life in material pursuits. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the nation, observed as follows: "To me *sewa*, service of the poor, opens the easiest way to God". Better words cannot be found than these to describe the present crisis in the social and spiritual plane and the serious problem facing humanity today. If we are to get over the present impasse every one of us should develop a strong desire to eschew base material pursuits

and cultivate higher spiritual values of life. Otherwise, there is no hope for us.

There can be no true happiness and peace of mind until we hand over our burdens to the Lord and live a divine contented and devoted life even while we are engaged in our multifarious duties, as declared in the immortal *Gita*. Duties discharged as sacrifice in the altar of God without expectation of reward never bear good or evil fruit. While serving the *Guru* one should not have any sense of ego but surrender his body, mind and soul to Him. Such service alone is real service and leads one to spiritual bliss. Faith and courageous patience (*Nishtha and Saburi*) are the two means prescribed by Sri Sai Baba for attaining God-realisation. Faith steers us through the most difficult paths. Prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered.

It will be fruitful to remind ourselves of some of the noble teachings of Sri Sai Baba and rededicate ourselves to translate into action those eternal truths.

1. Adhere to truth always.
2. Give alms to the poor and the needy as much as you can.
3. Love all creatures.
4. Do not be jealous of the wealth and prosperity of another.
5. Always work hard and do not remain indolent or lazy.
6. Have consideration for the poor and the wretched.
7. Be content with what God has given you.
8. Always meditate on God and have His holy name on your lips.
9. Try to avoid bad company.

Let us all worship and pray to Sri Sai Baba for His benevolent and kind grace. Even today Baba hears our prayers from his *Samadhi* and grants whatever is good for us.

JAI HIND

'Bhakti marga (Path of devotion) is the easiest of all. Man is so weak, in love, in Bhakti, in devotion is the secret, which can with less difficulty, be seized by the average man of the age in which we live. Neither by knowledge itself, not *karma*—action but *Bhakti*, living faith or love can draw man the quickest to God'.

H. H. Swami Kesavaiahji

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SAI RAM

Look at the Baba's Posture, How fine it is! He is sitting with his legs folded, the right leg held across the left knee. The fingers of his left hand are spread on the right foot. On the right toe are spread his two fingers—the index and middle ones. By this posture Baba means to say as it were if you want to see my light be egoless and most humble and meditate on my toe through the opening between the branches—index and middle fingers—and then you will be able to see my light. This is the easiest means of attaining devotion.



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THE MISSION OF SAI BABA

By

Sri B. V. KUMAR

First Secretary, Embassy of India, KUWAIT

“Whenever there is a decay of *Dharma* (righteousness) and an ascendancy of unrighteousness I manifest myself; and for the protection of the virtuous, the destruction of the vicious and for the establishment of righteousness, I manifest myself in age after age.” (Bhagavad Gita — Chapter IV, 28).

India, is one of the very few blessed countries in the world where many saints like, Nivrutti, Jnanadev, Muktabai, Namdev, Gora, Gonayi, Ekanath, Tukaram, Narhari, Narsibhai, Sajan Kasai, Sawata, Ramdas and saints like Buddha, Mahavira, Adi Sankara, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda and Ramana Maharishi and various others, did appear at various times to show the right path to the people. Sai Baba was one of the greatest amongst them, and the banks of the River Godavari are very fortunate as it gave refuge to many a saint including Sai Baba.

Like all saints, Sai Baba created faith in people in the existence of God and His omnipotence and omnipresence and constantly reminded them that He is all pervading—the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. “Be wherever you like, do whatever you choose, remember this well, that all what you do is known to me.” He used to constantly remind his devotees to surrender ego and body consciousness and leave it to Him. “I shall draw out my devotees from the jaws of death.”

He knew that in the modern world, where people are always preoccupied with their work for mere survival, there is no place for

practising various *sadhanas*. The *sadhana* for Krita age was *shama dana* (tranquillity of mind and body); for Treta age, sacrifice; for Dwapara, worship and for Kali yuga, it is singing of the name and glory of the Lord. The last *sadhana* is open to all people. The other *sadhanas* like *yoga*, *yaga*, *dhyana*, and *dharana* are very difficult to practise, but singing the glory of the Lord is easy. “The simple remembrance of my name as ‘Sai, Sai’ will do away with sins of speech and hearing.”

He gave different experiences to different people even after His death and drew them to Him and in the process helped them in not to deviate from the path of righteousness. For His devotees, He was *Saranagati*, and once a devotee surrendered to Him, he had nothing to worry.

Sai Baba is all pervading, even today, and He stated that even after His physical form merges with the five elements, His bones will speak from His *Maha Samadhi*. More than that, we hear and see His presence through Saints like Swami Kesaviahji, who are carrying out His mission.

I am one of those fortunate few who experienced miracles to reinforce my faith in Sai Baba.

It was my good fortune to visit Swamiji every week and receive his blessings. One Wednesday night I saw in my dream Swamiji sitting in the chair and as I did normally, I prostrated before him. When

I lifted my head I saw Swamiji get up from the chair and in the same seat I found Sai Baba sitting with all His brilliance. Golden light was emanating and surrounded the entire room. I was in a state of ecstasy and I again fell on my knees and offered my prayers for giving me an opportunity for his *Darshan*. It was a glorious and unforgettable experience and when I woke up I remembered it very vividly and felt extremely happy.

The next day as usual I visited Swamiji and after doing my *Pranam* I thought of mentioning the incident to him, but kept quiet. Normally Swamiji gives his blessings and udhi but on that day he gave me a silver coin and blessed me saying that "You keep it, it will do you a lot of good." Then I narrated my experience of the previous night and with his usual humility he said it was all Sai Baba's grace and some how felt that he should give the coin to me.

On another occasion when I was posted outside India I had to dispose of my ancestral property within a week, and in the normal course it should have been next to impossible in a city like Madras. I also felt after making initial moves, which we should do for sale of such property, that it was an extremely difficult task. Certain complications also arose during negotiations. I went to Swamiji and narrated to him my difficulties. He stated that there was nothing to worry and that things would take their own shape provided I believed in Sai Baba and left everything to him. As assured by him I was able to complete the whole transaction very smoothly within a week and left the country in peace.

Scores of miracles like that could be narrated out of my personal experiences. This happens to every devotee to remind him the presence of God and much more than that to increase his faith in God so that he will not deviate from the path of righteousness.

"The suffering of privations is brave, but it is braver to feel for others and stint yourself to help them."

— Tiruvalluvar

Tribute

By

Late Sri B. V. NARASIMHA SWAMIJI

(1945)

Sri S. B. Kesavaiah is an ardent Sai Bhaktha and special features in his devotion are not merely the intensity of his concentration when he is seated at puja for hours in front of Sri Sai Baba's portrait but also its resultant benefits. One remarkable feature of his pujas, especially on Thursdays is this. Soon after the concentration in puja ends, he throws open the doors of the pooja room to let in the visitors kept out till then. The words that come out of his lips and addressed to them at that time often reveal a knowledge of things occurring far away and unknown to him. He has also often made statements as to future events that have come out to be true.

The future is in a sense kept hidden from mortals and up to a time even from some Gods. Yet glimpses of the future are given even to mortals, of course, with certain limitation. Intense concentration with faith on Sri Sai Baba is productive not merely of spiritual benefits but also of certain powers and graces like the above limited powers of prediction.

Numerous instances are found in the pages of *Sai Sudha* evidencing the wonderful accuracy of several of Sri S. B. Kesavaiah's predictions. If they were all invariably true one would begin to identify him with

Sri Sai Baba. Sri S. B. Kesavaiah is frank enough to admit that a few powers (within limits) granted to him by the grace of Sri Sai Baba do not make him a Sai. We must applaud him for his humility, candour and truthfulness. Powers of various sorts of spiritual grace mark the upward path of the *Sadhaka* and we may hope that Sri S. B. Kesavaiah, who is yet in his middle age may live long, to develop the spiritual graces more and more, obtain through them more and more confidence of the public and achieve through all these great and honourable service to humanity.

"If a hundred out of a thousand people get benefit by listening to me, nine hundred people get benefit by attending Swami Kesavaiahji's puja. After Puja he tells of future events in a remarkable way".

"You are one of the best pillars of the Sai Movement and your work like that on Ramanavami celebrations carries the movement from strength to greater strength and you deserve the esteem and support of every Sai Bhaktha".

"With your staunch and powerful Bhakthi, you have drawn so many persons to Baba's feet and Baba will crown the present and other efforts of yours with success and remarkable success".

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MYLAPORE - MADRAS-4.

AN APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore, is one of the sacred shrines in Tamilnadu virtually over-flows with pilgrimage public from far and wide. The beautiful temple, picturesque tank and the majestic Gopuram draw visitors from all parts of the Globe. The Saivite Saints of the 7th century, Sambandhar and Appar have sung about this shrine in their hymns. Lord Singaravelar in this temple is also sanctified by the Thiruppugazh song of Arunagirnathar. Bringing back to life of the girl Poombavai by the Saint Gnana Sambandhar is considered to be the most beautiful miracle in this temple. Thus this temple is famous for its hoary traditions, historical significance and mythological importance.

In this famous, ancient holy temple, it is proposed to pave the praharam with the granite cutstone at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,00,000/- The devotees are requested to come forward with their support and to contribute liberally their mite to make this holy task a success. The Hon'ble Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department, Madras-Thiru M. Kannappan has inaugurated this scheme on 22-8-71. The cost of granite cutstone pavement is only Rs. 400/-per one hundred square foot.

It is for the devotees to complete the noble task and to restore the ancient temple to its original grandeur. The donations may be sent to the "EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SRI KAPALEESWARAR TEMPLE, MYLAPORE, MADRAS-4" and to get the receipt for the amount paid from the Devasthanam office and to receive the blessings of SRI KARPAGAMBAL KAPALEESWARAR.

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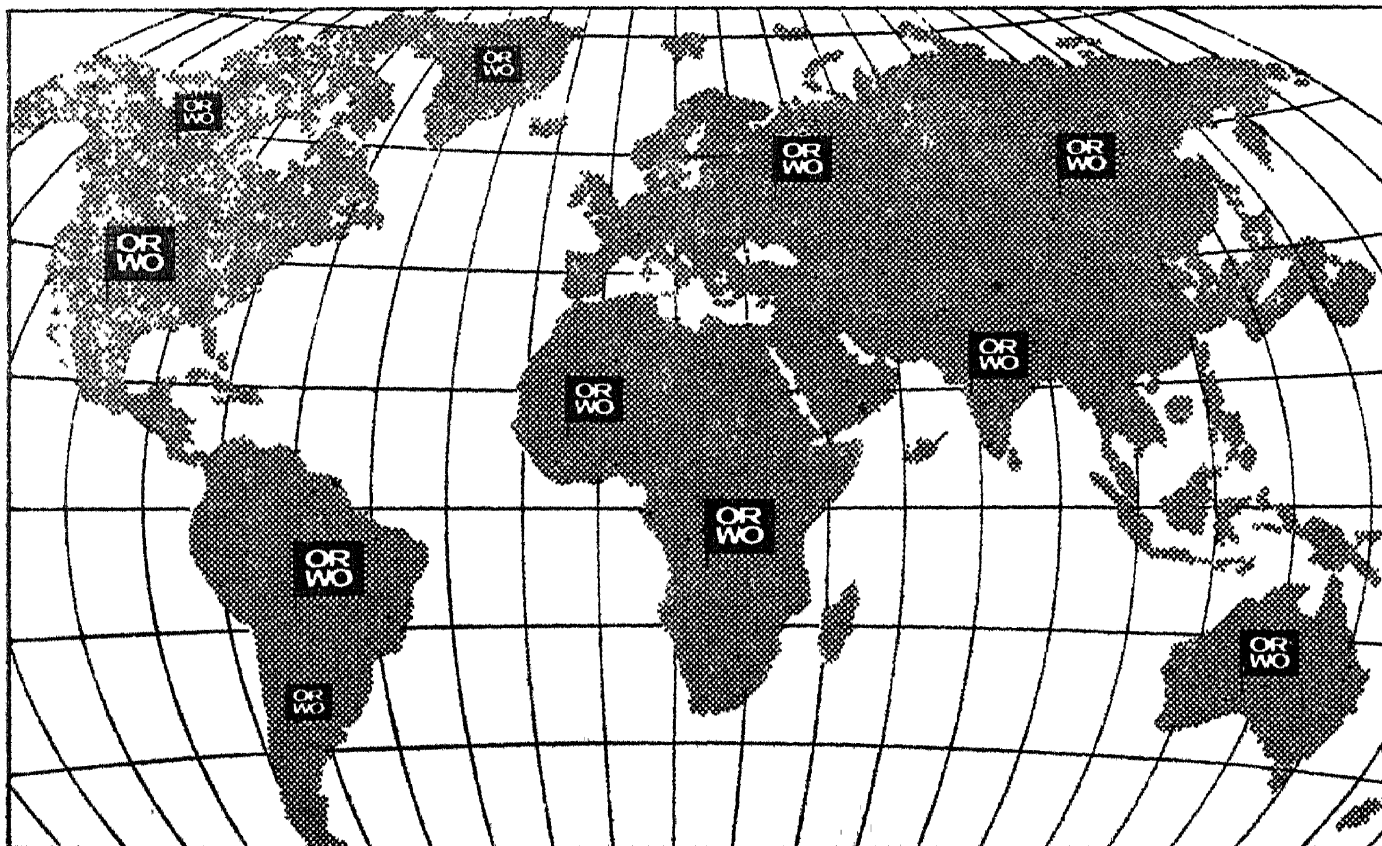
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FAITH IN GOD

By

Kulapathi S. Balakrishna Joshi

Principal, D A V Higher Secondary School Madras

God is the only Reality: All else is bound to perish and vanish. The ultimate purpose of life is to realise God. Every thought we entertain every word we utter and every act we do must help us go nearer God. Such a course is possible only when we have an intense faith that God exists, that He is the source and summation of all wisdom, beauty and strength and that without His will not a blade of grass can move. A faith like that helps a person to realise that God is everywhere and that nothing can escape His notice. He alone can come to our succour when no human agency can do us any good. Wisdom therefore lies in a total and unquestioning surrender to God. He takes care of us and leads us on to the highest bliss. A child has no need to remind its mother everyday of what it expects to be done for it. On the other hand, the mother with solicitous affection attends to all the needs of the child. Even so, the divine Parent who is aware of what is good, necessary and helpful for us, much more than the human parent, vouchsafes unto us all that is required to make our lives materially happy and spiritually rich. God does it only when we have implicit faith in Him and bow to His will at all times. Occasionally, things may not turn up as we desire. It is not proper to give way to despair and feel disappointed that God has failed to grant us our wish. We can only look a few steps forward and decide what should be necessary for us according to human

calculation. But God sees through eternity and does what would be ultimately helpful to us. A great poet observes that even in affliction there is God's grace. The sorrows that descend upon us and the difficulties that confront us, are only meant to chasten our spirit, and make us fit receptacles of God's grace.

Faith in God is the foundation of all virtues. It accomplishes miracles beyond the human ken. Jesus Christ said that, if only a man has as much faith as a mustard seed, he can move mountains. Sri Hanuman *did* move and carry a mountain which bore the life-giving herb to save Sri Lakshmana. His matchless faith in Sri Rama gave him the power to do it. A tender lad like Dhruva was able to see God by the might of his faith. To this day he shines resplendent as the Pole Star in the firmament, a beacon-light to all aspirants after Truth. Prahlada a boy-devotee could by his marvellous faith make God manifest Himself in a pillar to convince his father that God is omnipresent. Markandeya could conquer death and attain immortal youth by his self-surrendering faith in God. Draupathi was able to protect her modesty and vindicate the chastity of womanhood when unholy hands strove to strip her of her clothes. It was her terrific faith in Sri Krishna that saved her in an unparalleled crisis.

In our own times, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has given an unassailable

proof of what faith can accomplish. He clasped the feet of the Divine Mother with tenacious faith as an innocent child would cling to the human mother for protection. The highest wisdom stood revealed to him even though, judged by modern canons, he was unlettered. He could see, sense and feel God every moment of his life and regulate his conduct in the light of the divine instruction he received. Sri Thyagaraja, the Saint-Singer, could reach to the highest beatitude by his faith in Sri Rama which found copious expression through sublime songs. Swami Ramathirtha, the poet-monk of the Punjab, was aboard the ship bound for America. He had not with him the resources necessary for stay in that distant foreign region. He had utter faith that God in Whom he trusted would take care of him. An American co-passenger was struck by the divine glow in the monk's face. He spontaneously drew towards Swami Ramathirtha and made enquiries of him. Learning that he was going all alone to distant America without anything that he could call his own, he questioned if Swamiji had any good friend in that strange land to help him. Swamiji answered in the affirmative, patted the stranger on his back and said that *he* was the friend who would help him. The

stranger was startled into friendliness and became thereafter Swamiji's companion and guide. Discerning people in our land know that Gandhiji's matchless power lay in his invincible faith in Sri Rama. It is no exaggeration to state that it was this faith which he inculcated in the masses through his prayer meets, that wrested freedom for India. Prayer is but an expression of the faith that surges in the bosom of a holy man.

Association with pious-men helps to make our lives an eternal flame of active faith. We have in Swami Kesavaiahji such a holy elder. By his radiant life and noble spiritual ministrations, he has been inculcating in people faith in God. The Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam over which he presides, has become a well-known religious centre. Sri Sai Baba Mahasamadhi Day, Sri Rama Navami, and Gurupoornima which are celebrated under its auspices year after year, draw large numbers belonging to different persuasions. It was my privilege to actively participate in these functions two times and experience great elation of spirit. In the present context, when sinister ideologies, masquerading as elements of a new philosophy, subtly seek to degrade the mind, Swamiji's influence is valuable in sustaining and developing Faith in God.

May all be happy. May all be free from disease. May all realise what is good. May none be subject to misery.

— (Universal Prayer)

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A DREAM REALISED - A MISSION FULFILLED

Sri T. Chengalvaraya Pillai, B.A., L.T.,

Retd. Head Master

The Shenoy-nagar Colony with the biggest Park named after the famous Labour Leader and scholar Thiru V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar sprang up in 1943 in the Western extremity of the City of Madras as a part of the Master Plan for West Madras Neighbour-hood which envisaged the construction of not less than 10,000 houses for the Middle and Lower Income group of residents, thanks to the far sightedness of Mr. Shenoy, the then Commissioner of the Corporation of Madras. Today Shenoy-nagar has blossomed into the widely sprung extension of "Perarignar Anna Nagar", extending upto Tirunagar near the Suburb of Arumbakkam on the West and the Integral Coach Factory on the north-eastern side.

The world Trade Fair held in Anna Nagar in 1968 has invested this vast Colony of West Madras Neighbour-hood with an additional significance consequent on the International Contact through the Trade Fair participants from all over the world.

Above all these, Shenoy-nagar has come to occupy a unique position in our country by virtue of the spiritual aroma cast on it by Sri Swami Kesavaiahji, the Chosen Apostle of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. Swami Kesavaiahji is held in high esteem in this part of our country since the year 1948-49.

Saint Appar says in his *Thevaram* hymns that a residential locality lacks divine grace if it does not have a temple in its midst. When the Shenoy-nagar Colony which sprang up and began to extend and develop gradually, the pious residents devoted to

the worship of God keenly felt the need for a place of worship, if not a temple here.

As the good luck of Shenoy-nagar residents - nay the citizens of the whole of Madras - would have it, Sri Swami Kesavaiahji, Sub-Registrar in the Composite State of Madras and later Manager in the office of the I. G. of Registration, Andhra Pradesh, had his transfer from Anantapur District to the City of Madras. Sri Swami Kesavaiahji, who was called upon by Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi through a distinct divine vision vouchsafed unto him, set up his holy abode in the midst of the Shenoy-nagar residents in the year 1949 after erecting a temple at Penukonda in Anantapur District.

Shenoy-nagar has since then become a Centre of Sri Sai Baba's worship invoking the praise of even Sri B. V. Narasimha Swamiji the Founder-President of All India Sai Samaj. Thousands of devotees from far and near throng to Sai Nilayam, the residence of Sri Swami Kesavaiahji where the weekly worship with silent Prayer and meditation are being conducted by him.

Week after week the number of devotees participating in Sai worship began to increase rapidly. The long queues of pious worshippers standing in pin-drop silence is a holy sight worth witnessing. Men and women, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the learned and illiterate all have been coming here despite inconvenience of inclement weather and lack of transport facilities. Devotees in long queues had to wait for hours on end not minding the weather conditions.

Swami Kesavaiahji's heart over flowing with love for the devotees melted at the sight of these numberless devotees exposed to unfavourable weather – scorching heat of the day, the biting cold of the winter season and occasional drizzling and heavy showers of rain in the night. Hence he started the Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam in the year 1959 enrolling members and marshalling public support for the erection of a suitable Prayer Mantap to shelter the devotees from the weather conditions and to render it possible for them to be seated comfortably in a spacious hall to have the darsan of Sri Sai Baba.

It has been the dream of Swami Kesavaiahji day and night, in sleep and wakefulness to have the Prayer Mantap erected here in the open and spacious grounds situated in front of Sai Nilayam. After prolonged and untiring efforts the required site was assigned - thanks to the Corporation of Madras and the Government of Tamil Nadu for helping this noble cause. It took nearly two decades for the realisation of Sri Swami Kesavaiahji's dream. There were many hurdles and obstacles in the way of the devotees who made ceaseless and strenuous efforts to have the site assigned to Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam. Often the devotees grew tired and impatient. But our Swamiji, who had irrevocably pinned his faith in Baba's grace, counselled patience to the devotees and advised them to bide till such time as Baba chose to shower His grace and make their prayers for a Mantap fruitful. Heart within and God above, SWAMIJI WAS CEASELESSLY PRAYING FOR THE REALISATION OF HIS DREAM AND FULFILMENT OF HIS SPIRITUAL MISSION.

Like Saint Pusalar of *Periya Puranam* fame who lived at Tirunindravur (Tinnanur in the vicinity of Madras), Swami Kesavaiahji was

building Baba's temple in his heart invisible and incomprehensible to the mundane world.

Today is a glorious day which deserves to be recorded in letters of gold in the annals of the history of Tamil Nadu that it has been given to us to witness the opening of this magnificent edifice dedicated to Sri Sai Baba for his unfailing Grace to radiate from here henceforth for days months and years. This holy edifice was steadily growing in the vision and dream of Swami Kesavaiahji. We are beholden to the devotees and philanthropists of Tamil Nadu in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular besides devotees of other States in our country for their generous donations towards the prayer mantap. Not only the rich and the well-to-do but also the poor contributed their mite like the proverbial squirrel of *Ramayana* which participated in its humble way in building the Sethu Bridge.

In this connection a significant fact has to be mentioned and that is the building up of a Sinking Fund for the Mantap mainly from the surplus amount of contributions made by the devotees every year for the celebration of the Maha Samadhi Day of Sri Sai Baba on Vijayadasami days and the celebration of Sri Rama Navami. It is a matter for wonder and admiration that the personal attention paid to minute details of receipts and expenditure and meticulous care with which Sri Swami Kesavaiahji has been husbanding the financial resources of Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam, it has been possible for us to have the building fund rising up to more than a lakh of rupees apart from the donations that flowed from the pious devotees and philanthropists ever since the starting of the construction of the Sai Mandir. It is not an exaggeration to say that never in the history of any such public institution of religious nature there has been

such a careful management of financial matters and prevention of wasteful expenditure. It is all due to the personal attention, religious care and dedicated service of Swami Kesavaiahji.

Weekly worship is conducted at Sai Nilayam in such an admirable manner every Thursday evening that devotees coming here return with perfect satisfaction and peace of mind. The devotees stand in queues in solemn silence and deep meditation till they get their turn to have *darshan* of baba, *UDHI* and blessing from Sri Swami Kesavaiahji.

People of all levels of society high and low, rich and poor, young and old are treated alike here. No personal gifts are demanded or accepted in kind or cash. Even the fruits and flowers offered by the worshippers are redistributed as *prasadam* among the devotees coming for *darshan* of Baba. Countless are the instances of devotees having had cures for their mental

and physical ills and solutions to their problems of varied kind. There are also innumerable instances of Baba's boons having been bestowed on them through Sri Swami Kesavaiahji. Long wished-for-marriages have been performed and the desires of childless parents have been fulfilled in the case of many devotees who were regularly worshipping Baba at Sai Nilayam.

The Sai Mandir that has risen in such grandeur is an enviable asset to the city of Madras and Tamil Nadu and it is a memorable symbol and sacred monument which bear tangible witness to Sri Swami Kesavaiahji spiritual force. It is a FULFILLMENT OF HIS LONG CHERISHED MISSION AND REALISATION OF THE DREAM so dear to him.

May Sri Sai Baba bless him with long and healthy life so that for many many years the Sai Devotees may receive from him bounteous gifts of Baba's Grace. Let that be our sincere prayer today.

“ Formulas of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems vary,
Relinquishment, possession, and the like,
All these are but delusions of the mind—
Love, Love—that's the one thing, the sole treasure.”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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"Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection,

*Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert
sand of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action
into that heaven of freedom, my Father let my country awake."*

—GURUDEV TAGORE.

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Students from all parts of the country are admitted. At the college level, Arts, Commerce and Sciences parallel classes are conducted in Telugu, Tamil and English medium. In the case of states where there is the PUC class, students are admitted at present in the second year of Intermediate course.

The Primary school started with 62 children in 1962 has now on its rolls 1050, and the college started 1969-70 with 26 in Arts and Commerce in three media has now 750 students in Arts, Commerce and Sciences-MPC & BPC with Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Sanskrit as first languages and Kannada from 1974 academic year.

The school is blessed by the Sages of East & West and the living Saints and Sages, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Chidananda, Swami Chidbhavananda, Swami Keshavaiahji and Kesavadoss and others.

The Committee has launched the building schemes both for School and College at an Estimated cost of 3 lacs.

Macherla RAMA RAO,
President

M. S. KOTISWARAN,
Honorary Secretary & Principal

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

By

Prof. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

Vice-President, Sabitya Akademi

Our faculties are ordinarily prone to diffuse, disperse or dissipate their energies. We try simultaneously to see many things, hear many voices, pursue many ideals — and we also try to do them all at one and the same time. There is doubtless much expenditure of effort, but it is followed by no more than a confused incomprehension, a frustrating lack of achievement. Even with our material resources, any mere random dispersion must prove wasteful. Troops, armaments, finance, machinery, all have to be brought to effective use at some chosen point at the right time; otherwise the achieved result will have no relation to the volume of resources deployed. Concentration is simply the art of directing one's faculties or resources towards one carefully chosen end. It needed concentration on Arjuna's part to see, not the forest, not the tree, not the branch of the tree on which the bird was perching, but only the bird — or the neck at which he wished to aim his arrow. Whether it is a question of spotting a pin on the ground, or catching a word (one out of many) spoken or determining the quality of the silk from the feel of the fingers, a particular type of concentration is always called for. This, of course, applies even more to the faculty of thinking.

Left to itself, the mind is a restless monkey, and frantically tries to think of a hundred things at once. Following the play of the senses, the mind too becomes wayward and high fantastical. If there is to be thinking to some purpose, the mind has first to be insulated from the influence

of irrelevant impression stimulated by the senses, and only then could the mind be steadied to concentrate — to bring its energies to act at one point or flow in one direction. Any worthwhile occupation of study — not mathematics alone! — requires such concentration. Likewise, the solution of any problem whatever, whether in business, administration or personal life, demands concentration, for it is concentration that seizes and solves the problem posed by a conjunction of given facts or circumstances.

When the mind tries to concentrate, not on an everyday problem, but on the problem of 'ends and means', of 'first and last things', of 'free will and predestination' when the mind tries to follow a chain of ideas starting from, say a *mahavakya*, like *anityam asukham lokam* or *tatwamasi*, such a self-absorbed exercise of the mind becomes meditation or *dhyana*. Instead of pursuing, by association of ideas or otherwise, particular chains of thoughts, if the mind concentrates rather on a single object, image or idea, it is something more than meditation, it is contemplation — it is Thought growing paraclete — wings and exploring the infinitudes of suggestion or *dhwani* behind, say, Krishna's Flute, the symbol of the Cross, or the concept of *Nirvana*.

But mental concentration, the practice of meditation, the steering of contemplation — none of them is easy. Thoughts a thousand come, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the utterly trivial to the most moment-

ous, thoughts mundane, thoughts sensual, thoughts speculative — and, caught in this siege of contraries, what is the mind to do? One may take the usual preparatory steps to meditation: seclusion in a room with its own enabling atmosphere, stillness of body, closure of the eyes, an appropriate posture, even breath-control or *pranayama*. Yet concentration may prove difficult for reasons like restlessness, anxiety, impatience, lassitude, forgetfulness, nervous strain, sullenness, depression, resentment, or just (how ridiculous!) sleep. Or even when all else is stilled and the mind alone is active, its very excess of energy may raise obstacles to anything like settled concentration. The multitudinous 'thoughts' surge within, as it were, or come in a flood from without. What is to be done? It is almost worse than if one didn't try to concentrate!

As one progresses in meditation, this is what we may hope for:

At first a yogi feels his mind
Is rumbling like a waterfall;
In mid-course, like the Ganges
It flows on slow and gentle;
In the end, it is a great
Vast ocean, where the Lights
Of son and Mother merge in one

(Teachings of Tibetan Yoga,
by Garma C.C. Chang)

When one feels overwhelmed by such an invasion or submersion, one has to try to enact the inner drama of oneself observing one's thoughts come and go, but without passion and without adhesion to them. Vivekananda's tip is that one should learn to view the flow of thoughts as a natural function of the human mind, and so just let them run down and flow away. One is caught in-it has walked into the rain: the water falls, the water drips, the water reaches and is lost in the ground, while the body is

hardly affected. Let the thoughts come and go, let them exhaust themselves; let the mind learn to feel indifferent to the ebb and flow—let there be no personal involvement or identification with them!

One might adopt a subtler strategy still, says Sri Aurobindo; "the thoughts are regarded as things coming from outside, from *Prakriti*, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest". When the meditation starts and the invasion of extraneous ideas begins—and both take place (shall we say) in the theatre of the mind—the meditative half of the mind should learn to play the immaculate *Purusha* and squarely confront the seething *Prakriti* half that throws up thoughts upon thoughts with promiscuous unconcern, waves upon waves of thought coming, receding, coming again. The *Purusha* would then be able to view the riot or the oceanic swell of thoughts with a measure of objectivity, calling discrimination into play, weighing the thoughts and rejecting them where necessary, sensitising more and more the instrument, the process. Let the thoughts come, but they will have to stand rigid scrutiny, they will be sorted out and judged, they may have to be firmly rejected. As the days pass, the very existence of the *Purusha*—censor will act as a check to the heady flow of thoughts.

Through such meditative self-observation, then or, through meditative self-censorship and the resulting rejection of the fraudulent and the fleeting, the mind should learn in course of time to scent even from a distance the imminent invasion of random or poisonous thoughts and, like fighters intercepting bombers, throw back the invasion before it has had a chance to enter the inner chambers of the mind. This would be the throw-back strategy, the

discipline of effective defence from the hordes of invading thoughts. The *Purusha*-mind is now sovereign, he imposes a great quietude on *Prakriti*, and the mind in the ineffable stillness of *dhyana* can hopefully wait on God — can hold itself in attention to hearken to His whisper or voice. For each truly profound meditation ought to be a witness to something spoken, something happening, to the soul within.

Although in the first instance the disciplining of the mind through meditation — the transformation of mind the monkey into Thought the Paraclete — calls for certain external as well as internal checks and limitations, as more and more experience is gained and the practice of concentration and meditation becomes easier and increasingly like second nature, it may become possible gradually to obliterate the distinction between the normal and the meditative state, the latter becoming progressively a matter of habit, all outward actions taking place only on the surface without disturbing the inner calm. There should then be no need for scheduling fixed hours for meditation, nor for imposing on oneself the external conditions of solitude, stillness of body, or breath-control, nor for exercising constant vigilance to restrain the play of wrong or wayward motions of the body, mind and heart.

At its most rewarding, meditation becomes verily a sheer waiting on God, all distracting or disturbing thought-impulses and thought-currents rejected or turned back, and the mind's interior realms cleansed and becalmed and sanctified. Expectantly waiting on God, a prayer might rise from the heart's sanctuary for an opening of the gateway to God. All prayer is supplication, making a request, articulating a hope, all

in the immediacy of God; approaching God, waiting on Him, forging one's way through the gateway to God, almost conducting a secret conversation with God. One speaks, one asks, one supplicates — and one waits for His answer, His response. The whole point of the prayer is that God can be approached, He can be spoken to — and when spoken to, He will surely answer, He will surely speak to us. It follows therefore that, even as one prays, one listens too — one waits for Him to speak. And because He may not speak as we expect Him to, because our requests may be (indeed they generally are) foolish, our fears unfounded, our speculations puerile — it will not be easy for us to catch His words or seize their import. One has to learn His language, and this may take time; and therefore one has to be patient one has to persevere, and one needs endless humility.

But the assurance remains: knock and it will open, seek and you will find! When a mind and heart chastened and purified by the exercise of meditation articulates a prayer from the ineluctable stillness of the self, the answer is instantaneous as well as adequate, — yet one might miss it, or miss its purport, being impatient or insensitive. And although one might pray as one likes, God is unlikely to grant always what one asks for but only what is good for the suppliant. The whole object of the meditation and the prayer is neither to negotiate a deal with God nor get something one has set one's mind on, but simply to cleanse oneself and get near to God and open one's heart to HIM and thereby expose oneself to the redemptive power of His Grace.

(From the author's 'A Big Change')

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Swamiji blessing Sri C. R. Pattabhiraman Bar-at-law (former minister Govt. of India) when he presided over a meeting at Sai Nilayam on 12—10—1967.



Swamiji in this dress when he was the Sub-Registrar at Dharmavaram in Anantapur district before he had a revelation of Sri Sai Baba on 1-7-1939.



Swamiji with the Hon'ble Justice Mr. P. Ramakrishnan, I. C. S., High Court Judge & Sri N. Murugesu Mudaliar Retd. Dy-Secretary in Sai Nilayam on Gurupournima Day 31—7—1969.



Swamiji with the Hon'ble Justice Mr. T. Ramaprasada Rao, High Court Judge when he Presided over a meeting at Sai Nilayam with the late Sri K. Venkataswami Naidu & Sri T. Venkatadri, High Court Judge (Retd) on 4-4-1971



Photo shows the large gathering of devotees listening attentively on the occasion of a public meeting held at Sai Nilayam.

SAI BABA AND SWAMI KESAVAIAHJI

By

C. R. PATTABHIRAMAN

(*Barrister-at-law*)

It is the eternal aspect of our Indian culture and spiritual tradition that has made our motherland unique on earth. From the time of the *Upanishads*, it has always had an universal appeal. No being, human or otherwise, was considered inferior on any account. The Supreme is in all manifestations. In practice however many discriminatory observances have grown up. I am glad that we are gradually shedding them.

In historical times, from the Buddha downwards, we have had *mahatmas* who gave us in a nut-shell what was contained in many scriptures. Sai Baba, who appeared on the scene in Central India, is one such great sage. The beauty about him has been that Hindus claimed him as a Hindu and Muslims as a Muslim.

He was a realised soul who took upon himself the relieving the suffering of humanity. He rendered help and saved many a suffering person not only by encouragement but also by relief. The various miracles attributed to him are the grateful narrations by devotees who rushed to him having failed to get relief elsewhere. He had no possession of any kind. Like our *Maharishis*, the Buddha and Christ, he taught by example.

There is a *sloka* in Adi Sankara's *Subrahmanya Bhujanga* which is note-worthy. He says that there are many manifestations of the Supreme who are accessible to intellectuals and saints but none can be compared to Lord Skanda, whom the lowliest of men approached for relief. The role of Sai Baba was similar. His mission did not end with his life and his soul goes marching on, giving relief to his followers spread all over the country.

Among his followers, Sri Narasimhaswamiji was able to spread his teachings far and wide. Swami Kesavaiahji today is performing the same function. Not only does he foster the Sai cult but has also become the conduit pipe for the transmission of grace and relief of Sai Baba. I know a number of people who have gone to the Swamiji for blessings and relief. By his exemplary life and a winning modesty, he is radiating goodness all around him. On this Kumbhabhisheka day we must all remember with gratitude the great mission which is being performed by Swami Kesavaiahji. May he be preserved in good health and cheer for many years to come.

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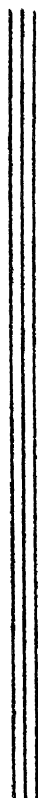
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RELEVANCE OF SWAMI KESAVAIAHJI'S WORK TO ESTABLISH SRI SAI BABA IN OUR HEARTS

Rao Sahib N. Murugesu Mudaliar

(Sometime Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu and Special Adviser to Chief Minister)

The relevance of Sri Sai Baba's life and mission to the modern times was never borne in on me so much as when I read again with great *Bhakti* his life and teachings to write a short life of Sri Sai Baba for children. All saints are pure and innocent like a child, and never do we derive so much love and comfort as when we too borne child-like and look upon the Saint as Mother. ' God is Love ' is the verdict or *mahavakya* of the highest philosophy. God is apprehended only through love and it is the highest *jnana*. We cannot understand a Being who is *acintite* through logic. If we cannot know Him, he is as good as being non-existent. If on the other hand He is knowable through our senses and mind. He becomes subject to *upadhis* or limitations. So if we want to know God and realise His Love towards us, we can know Him only through God-like men. A Saint is one who has put himself in time with both the Absolute and the Imminent aspects of God. He is like one who takes you to a lake-bund and shows you the immense sheet of water on one side and the green fields on the other sustained by the life-giving waters. Without water the crops will perish but without sun over the head waters will dry up and crops will not grow and perish. The *Guru* teaches you to meditate on the sun.

Sri Sai Baba in all his acts and utterances wanted us to know the real meaning of life.

He did not want us to read many *Sastras* but see the Love of God in every thing and be happy. Without this attitude life will be a paradox and confusion. Sri Sai Baba has told us the story of a *vanajari* (forest dweller) who laughed at four of them who went to a forest in search of a *Guru*. They ignored his request to partake of something from his humble head before they proceeded with their mission to cross a forest without a guide. The *vanajari* was a real helper in the quest for a *jnana guru*. Sri Sai Baba needed the *vanajari* advice, took his loving offering and slept away and in his dream he was blessed with the vision of his *Guru* who made him perfect !

So, if we want to be a devotee of Sri Sai Baba, we want the help of a spirit who has already explored the field and gained experience and help us on the path to guide us. Such a one is Swami Kesavaiahji. His life mission is too well-known to read re-telling. He has established Sri Sai Baba in many hearts to realise for themselves the great promise of Sri Sai Baba that in the homes of his devotees there will be no want. He too is simple and child-like in his love towards us. His *Guruvara Puja* (Thursday Puja) has brought many hundreds of men and women and children closer to Sri Sai Baba. He has been a source of succour to hundreds of care-worn people by the grant of Sri Sai Baba's *Udhi* and his benediction. Last year I had some trouble in my eye. On knowing this, he

sent me *udhi* with his blessings. I have been cured by the grace of Sri Sai Baba through his chosen servant. I expressed my desire to fulfil the promise of writing a short life of Sri Sai Baba for children in simple words. Swamiji readily blessed it. In the process of writing I felt that I have derived more benefit than reading the *Bhagavad Gita* a dozen times, because Sri Sai Baba's simple utterances like were a *bhashya*. Soon after writing this, the marriage of my son which was pending, got settled happily. These are my personal experiences.

Swami Kesavaiahji has now accomplished the task of completing a beautiful *Mandir* for Sri Sai Baba in Shenoyanagar. I know personally the cares he went through in succeeding in this task. This *mandir* is only the beginning of a great mission. More remains to be done. Men and Money are needed to complete it and what is more the true devotion of a band of workers who would lighten the burden of Swamiji. Such men would be doubly blessed. May Swami Kesavaiahji's blessings be on us for all times !

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THE WAY HE WORKS

Prof. K. Seshadri

His way is the way of Grace. It is also the way of Love, for Love at its source is Grace. The power of Love is the Power of Grace. It does not hurt; it does not wound or maim,—even when it may apparently burn up or consume an entire organ or organism, in order to remove all that is dross.

There are two sides to the way He works,—a negative and a positive side. The negative is preparatory to the positive. It clears the ground for the positive to play its role and complete the consummation of Grace and the fulfilment of Love. On a superficial view, the negative preparatory aspect involves pain and entails suffering, while the other secures delight and satisfaction. The deeper truth is that both are integral to the workings of Grace.

How does Grace, that is Love, cause or tolerate pain and suffering? Either the cause and condition must cease to be Grace and Love, or the pain and suffering must be altogether illusory and unreal. Both these alternatives have been offered as solution to this most fundamental human problem by the philosophies of the world through the ages. But philosophies fail to satisfy, for they are all caught up in a vicious circle of egoistic logic. It is not the fault of reason or intellect as such, the fruit of whose exercise is philosophy, but of the ego, which limits the scope and function of reason and narrows it down to selfish ends and ignorant purposes. Instead of subserving the narrow interests of an un-enlightened ego, if reason could be an instrument of Grace it would break all barriers, and following the light of Love it would itself open up vistas of a transcendental logic, which would recognise the reality of

pain or suffering so far as it goes, and at the same time reveal its relevance to the plenitude of Grace and the perfection of Love.

Sai Baba has demonstrated the profounder implications of both the negative and positive aspects of the Workings of Divine Grace in several contexts, and elucidated the issues with perfect clarity and precision, particularly as it seems to me in the context of a specific situation and an articulated query, as to why on the one hand he would apparently pamper his devotees by granting them all that they want and on the other subject them to sufferings of a gross or subtle nature.

There are two *Purushas* in every individual,—One, the *papa purusha* or the sinful person and the other, the *punya purusha* or the person of accumulated merit. Both these constitute the consolidated essence of the individual's own past Karma, but neither of them would suffice to reveal or reflect the *true* individual or the individual as he is truly and in himself. His true nature—even as an individual—lies beyond sin and merit, beyond “*papa*” and “*punya*”. Sin and merit alike serve to strengthen or feed his ego. Hence, it is the ego that appears as man's most potent enemy. And when the ego is overcome or destroyed or liquidated, the individual sees himself as he is truly and thus awakens and responds to the impact of Grace.

Says Baba: “When a devotee comes to me seeking me as his refuge, I first burn up the *papa purusha* in him and thereby remove all the accumulated dross that hinders his vision and cripples his will. Then I turn to

the *punya-purusha* in him, and finding that there is a great deal which he deserves to enjoy by way of earthly gifts I provide him with all that he asks for (and even more) in order to expedite the working off of his merits, and finally lead him to that state of fulfilment in oneness with me, which is the ultimate goal of all aspiration and endeavour ”.

I am aware that I am not quoting *verbatim* the utterances of Sri Sai Baba. But that is the gist of his explanation as found in the pages of the *Life of Sai Baba* by H. H. Narasimha Swami. I felt drawn, heart and soul, by the directness of its compelling logic and the power of its overflowing love. I saw hidden in it the vision of Grace, that did not merely offer a solution to perplexing problems but provided a whole picture of fulfilled life. Baba says, ” I grant all the

things that people ask of me, so that I may draw them towards me ”. Drawing people to Him is but the initial step. Having drawn them He holds them close, and works to lead them on to higher levels and sublimer dimensions of experience.

Baba’s compassion is infinite. His love is universal. He is the embodiment of Grace, which He showers on all, irrespective of caste, creed or other affiliation. His *siddhis* are marvellous, limitless, multidimensional. Yet, it is not these that constitute the real essence of His divine nature and glory ; and it is not these that keep us bound to Him intimately and for all time. Fortunate, indeed, are those, - like Sri Swami Kesavaiahji - aptly described as the *ankita* children of Sai, the universal father. Let Sai fill our hearts, and let us learn to live in Sai.

“ Worship blended with devotion will endure for a long time.”

“ A man of devotion is superior to others.”

“ Salvation becomes easy if one loses oneself in devotion.”

“ Is there any use in singing His praises without devotion ? ”

— VEMANA

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SRI SAI BABA AND HIS DISCIPLES

Sri M. S. KOTISWARAN, M.A., (*Columbia*)

It is heartening to learn that *Mandir* of Sai Baba at Shenoyanagar is nearing completion. Swami Kesavaiahji is a *mandir* builder. His ceaseless effort during the last few years with a fearless courage and faith in the unfailing grace of the Sage of Shirdi, living in the spiritual consciousness serving the devotees that go to him on Thursdays at his own residence for over a decade to erect an Edifice just opposite his house and the realisation of his thought, dream and vision bears testimony to the development of his inner personality. Purity, bliss, blessedness and peace make up an atmosphere of meditation. Swami Kesavaiahji has been all these years discharging his duties as a sub-registrar and after retirement living in dedicated life enjoys the *Guru's* grace.

In the words of Baba and other great sages, the *guru* is ever with the disciple. No matter where he goes, he is already there. He lives for the disciples. He bequeaths the fruit of his realisation to the disciple. He and the disciple are one. The *guru* is God. He knows the measures of the power of the disciple. He works through him. The disciple is the master in another form. The more the disciple absorbs the vision of the *guru*, the more they grow into that Spiritual oneness which is the Divine life. The veils of separate personality fall off the master and the disciple merge into one.

Swamiji follows the teachings of the Master. Discipleship consist in steadiness of devotion and immeasurable love for the master. Such is the state of one-ness that

Swamiji lives today. It is an imperceptable merge and an everlasting one - ness. His thoughts, words and deeds are Baba's. Living as he does he is conscious of the relation between him and the *Guru*. An immovable, eternal realisation has become his. He feels Baba's presence, his thoughts are his, thus does Swami Kesavaiahji serves humanity, builds shrines, solves the problems of the devotees, sees their future and predicts the future lifting the sinking souls.

The Sages have a mysterious way of drawing their disciples.

Let my soul speak — O thou Lord of Shirdi. I have not seen thee, nor have I heard of thy name. It was in 30s that great soul — B. V. Narasimha Swamy who wrote *Self Realisation* — Bhagavan Ramana's life that came on a fine morning from Tiruvannamalai with a picture of Thyself setting posture at Dhruvakomai and wanted me to arrange a meeting at the Devasthanam's High School. Readily did I arrange in the fascinating open air class rooms filled with pure sand of Palar edged with flower plants — Maruvu and Dhavanam. He sat on the stone seat under the Margosa Tree and his face beamed with a brightness and lustre. He observed : " Baba sat under the Neem tree " at Shirdi and preached and meditated.

The staff and students felt happy and it was an awakening in the hearts of all. Days and months and years passed. Thy manifestation was kept in the Pooja room and worship was offered along with other deities.

Again in 1942, Narasimha Swamy came to Tirupati where I was the Headmaster of the Devasthanam High School and addressed the students, and staff and blessed them.

He asked whether I was worshipping Thee "Sai of Shirdi" on Thursdays. I said No, and he wanted that I should start Thursday *Pooja* which I and my wife and my children did along with our worship of Ramana.

In 1944-45, after I took charge of the Principalship of the Mahbub College, Secunderabad, Narasimha Swamy came to Secunderabad, Sai Mandir, Market Street, where a great devotee, *Bhakta* G. V. R. Naidu was conducting Thursday *Poojas* in the evening. A meeting was arranged in the Jamshed Hall where today Tagore's Home Junior College, Arts and Commerce section is located. I was asked to preside.

My attachment and devotion to Thee became deeper, my vision brightened, my intellect illumined. These three fold attack on me by Thee through Narasimha Swamy who had not seen thy form but who had the peace, bless and blessedness sitting at thy Samadhi at Shirdi had their impact on me and an urge arose in my heart to pay homage to Thy shrine.

At that crucial stage Swami Kesavaiahji who was then the Sub-registrar at Penugonda where he had been instrumental in erecting a shrine paid a visit to G. V. R. Naidu's place. A meeting was arranged at Jamshed Hall, the hall being just opposite to G. V. R. Naidu's residence. Strangely enough I was asked to preside.

In this meeting Swami Kesavaiahji's exposition of Thee, all embracing love and compassionateness and how he had been blessed by Thee, to whom you have bestowed all thy powers, how he had visited thy shrine many a time and drawn inspiration was the final touch to my devotion, resulting in my visit with my wife and other family members.

Here again, O Lord you have shown your mystic mystery I went to Aurangabad where Dr. Sadasivam, a great soul immersed in Thy love was. It was he that sent me with another great soul to Shirdi. It was then the growing spiritual centre. The buildings were springing. We stayed in the room adjoining the Neem tree and slept in the upstairs-balcony surrounding the Samadhi. We visited Sakori and paid homage to Thy disciple-Upasini Baba. This was as a pilgrimage to a great shrine and I did not enter into the depth of the study of Thy life.

In 1960, Swami Kesavaiahji came over to Andhra Capital and founded the Sai Baba Seva Samaj at Secunderabad under the inspiring guidance of Sri Lakshmiah, the then Commissioner of Religious Endowments, a colleague and fellow disciple of Baba with whom, Swamiji visited Shirdi more than 18 times. This was a historic event. In the meetings and speeches Swamiji called upon every devotee to read *Sai Satcharitra* My esteemed friend R. Krishnamurthy was then at Secunderabad. With all the sanctity and sacredness he brought Sai's manifestation sitting on the stone with the right leg on the left and the members of my group started to study the life in English. It has now become a part and parcel of my life. Narasimha Swami pursued me and initiated me in Thursday's *Pooja* and Swami Kesavaiahji made me to delve deep into the study of the life and teachings of the Sage of Shirdi so much, that I have undertaken the translation of *Sai Satcharitra* into Tamil. Shirdi Sai Samasthan obtained sanction from Bombay Civil Court for publication by Sai Baba Seva Samaj, Secunderabad. Thus Baba gets his work done. Today Swami Kesavaiahji lives in the living Faith of Baba administering the healing powers to the suffering humanity, a power transmuted to Swamiji by Baba.

The Shenoyagar Mandir is a spiritual centre in the centre of the city spreading the message of Baba. My reverential Salutations to Swamiji.

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SRI SAI MISSION

By

Dr. G. KRISHNAN

(Prof. & Head of Zoology Dept., Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati)

Sai cult is a major spiritual force today attracting an ever widening circle of devotees. Its appeal has been particularly to the educated sections of the society, because of its rational approach and absence of dogma and ritual usually found in traditional religious lore. A notable feature of Sai cult is its emphasis on the essentiality of the moral code as a precondition for entry into religious and spiritual life. Emphasis has also been laid on the compatibility of normal family life with spiritual endeavours. There is no need for a spiritual aspirant to give up family life, wealth and worldly joys as a preparation for spirituality. Sri Sai Baba knowing fully the human motivations, did not prescribe *Sadhanas*, which run counter to them. On the other hand, he attracted to him devotees by an initial grant of worldly success and then gradually put them on the road to spirituality. There is something in human nature which makes men cling to life on earth in spite of it being inextricably mixed up with sorrows and suffering. At the same time man is not fully satisfied solely by the materialistic pleasures. There is evident, a subtle inner yearning for spiritual satisfaction. Sri Sai Baba emphasised that spirituality is not foreign to man, but is an essential part of human nature. What is required is to endeavour to get an insight into the spirit of man. The essential idea that lies at the root of Sai cult is that man should evolve gradually from a life of ignorance to one of intelligence and righteousness to be followed by spirituality. Sri Baba advised his devotees to pursue

their normal worldly life doing ones duties appropriate to the station in life they occupy, without losing sight of the higher purpose of life.

Apart from such practical aspects, the teachings of Sri Sai Baba are replete with the philosophic truths contained in the sacred literature of India. A central place is given in Sri Sai's teachings to the concept of *Samsara* which permeates Hindu philosophic thought and finds expression in our legends and history. This idea which pervades thinking at all levels in our society, finds conscious symbolization in the form of a wheel or *chakra*. The most important of such symbols is the *chakra* of Sri Maha Vishnu, which is suggestive of the endless round of life on earth, without a beginning or end like the continual rotation of the *chakra*. Sri Sai Baba brought out forcefully the idea that *samsara* is an endless round of pain, which has to be endured rather than cured, for pleasure and pain are the inevitable results of ones actions which have to be borne, although good actions and good thoughts may mitigate to some extent the effects of previous evil actions.

One of the themes of Sai cult is the oneness of all creation, the interdependence and inter-relatedness of all living things, because there is only one substance, the source which manifests itself as a lot of apparently different subjects, as people, animals and plants. The beginning and end of forms of life are alike. In this context Sri Sai expounded the concept of *Maya* which is the central theme in Hindu

philosophy. Human life on earth is impermanent and illusory because it gives the appearance of what it is not. To give a practical expression, Sri Sai kept a *Dhuni* or sacred fire ever burning during his life time. The ash from the fire the *udhi*, He gave as *prasad* to His devotees to impress on them that all visible phenomena in this world are as transient as ash. Our bodies composed of matter will fall down after its enjoyments are over and be reduced to ashes. The only reality is God. He wanted His followers to discriminate between the Real and Unreal.

Another important theme that finds expression in Sai cult is 'duality' by which is meant that man is a composite of human and divine elements. Sri Sai Baba expounded this concept many a time as follows: "Barring your name and form there exists in you as well as in all others, a sense of Being or consciousness of Existence. That is Myself. Knowing this you see Me inside yourself as well as in all beings". Our sacred books tell us that the end and aim of human life should be to resolve this duality to reach the point when duality ceases and the human soul merges with the Universal soul. At this juncture *Maya* is resolved and spiritual sovereignty attained. This is *Moksha* or spiritual freedom. Human life has been compared to the course of a river from its small beginnings in mountain crevices followed by meandering its way through tortuous courses symbolising *Samsara*, the journey's end being the merging with the ocean when the river loses its individuality just as the soul after its individual existence, going through the cycle of births and deaths ultimately loses itself in the Universal soul on attainment of *Moksha*. Sri Sai Baba's teachings conveyed in His characteristic simple and easily understandable manner, contain all the major themes of the religious and philosophic tradition of India.

Sri Sai Baba is not merely a great Saint who has attained spiritual perfection, but a great *Avatara Purusha* come into the world with the express mission of saving mankind from the depths to which it has sunk, by means of moral and spiritual regeneration. He enabled the common man to understand himself and the universe by presenting the eternal truths shorn of their abstractions and reduced to simple terms. His teachings tell us how best to live in this world by balancing the material needs for a good life, compatible with the aspirations of the Higher self. For this purpose He altered suitably the traditional and classical concepts of religion and philosophy to reflect modern life and thought.

Although Sri Sai Baba is not with us now in human form, He is still guiding us in His infinite aspect as may be inferred from the innumerable experiences, He is giving to His devotees who seek Him in earnest and dedicated spirit. The noble work of making Sri Sai available to us is being carried on by one of His ardent devotees Swami Kesavaiahji. The Thursday *poojas* conducted by Swamiji at Sai Nilayam, Shenoyanagar, Madras, has been attracting an ever increasing number of devotees. Many, afflicted with sorrows and suffering have been benefitted by their visits to the Sai shrine. To meet the requirements of the large concourse of devotees, the Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam under the leadership of its Founder-president Swami Kesavaiahji have put up with great effort, a beautiful Sai Mandir on the site opposite to Sai Nilayam. This is a noble service by the President and the Executive of the Samajam for which the public owe a deep debt of gratitude. May the good efforts of the Samajam meet with greater success in the years to come.

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A SWAMIJI WITH A DIFFERENCE

Dr. C. R. Sarma

Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi Madras

'Swamijis are serpents: be careful of them'. So observed Sri Swami Kesavaiahji at a meeting of the General Body of Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam, Madras, of which he is the Founder-President. At first, I was taken aback at this observation. But soon I composed myself and recalled the well-known verse of Vemana, the saint-poet of the Telugu country.

'Salt and camphor look alike
But differ when tasted;
So exist holy men among men'.

Swami Kesavaiahji, an ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, is a Swamiji with a difference. He does not wear the saint's robes, the *kaashaava*. He is clad in plain clothes — a dhoti, a banian and an upper garment. A red *tilak* adorns his forehead. He never calls himself a Baba. Nor does he pose himself as a man endowed with mystic or super human powers, albeit he possesses some inner power which gives a soothing comfort to those who approach him. He is not a great scholar, well versed in *sastras*. But his words, charged with piety and purity, are pregnant with higher truths. Gentle and unassuming, he is accessible to all — the poor and the rich, the low and the high and the layman and the scholar. His devotion coupled with selfless service and humanistic approach mark him as a Swamiji with a difference.

Sri Kesavaiahji's life story is a fascinating one. He was born in a village called Pamidi, a holy place, in Andhra Pradesh on 1 July — a New moon day (*Amaavasya*) in 1899. The general belief is that those

born on the *Amaavasya* day will either turn to be *yogis* or robbers. His family name is Swami and his full name Bala Kesavaiah. The members of the Swami family have dedicated themselves to the service of the Almighty. Kesavaiahji's elder brother Sanjivaiah was a well-known devotee who not only built a Hanuman temple but also made permanent arrangements for special *pooja* on every Saturday.

After passing his Matriculation examination, in 1923, Kesavaiahji entered the government service as clerk in the District Registrar's office, Anantapur. He became Sub-Registrar in 1930 and in that capacity he served at many places in Andhra districts. Throughout his service, he was known for his strictness and straightforwardness which were much appreciated by people and his superior officers. However, sometimes, he has had to incur displeasure from his colleagues. Finally, in 1963, Kesavaiahji retired from service as Manager in the office of the Inspector General of Registration, Madras.

Even from his boyhood, Kesavaiahji used to regularly visit the temples in Pamidi and engross himself in deep meditation. As years advanced, he visited almost all important shrines in South India. But the wonder is, he was a non-believer. It is only in July 1939, after experiencing the *darshan* of Sri Sai Baba, of whom he never heard before, Kesavaiahji became completely a new man — a god — man — and a devotee of the Baba. Since then he began to spread the grace of the Baba. He gave up the western style of dress and switched over to the native costumes.

1948 is yet another important year in Swami Kesavaiahji's life. After experiencing the sorrows and sufferings of the devotees apart from his own, he became a victim to that terrible disease T.B. He came to Madras for treatment. A team of eminent doctors attended on him and he put up a brave fight with *Mrityu devata* for about 10 months. Finally, Baba has showered His grace on his chosen devotee Kesavaiahji. Afterwards, he did not go to Penukonda where he was working, but settled down in Shenoinagar at Madras.

Swami Kesavaiahji is no magician. He is only a devotee of the Baba. He is a vehicle of Baba's mercy. His simple act of devotion draws hundreds and thousands of men and women, near and far, to the Sai Mandir founded by him. One should see on Thursdays the long queue of devotees in front of the Mandir, eagerly waiting to have a *darshan* of the Baba and receive blessings and *udhi* (sacred ash) from Kesavaiahji. Sometime he goes to his bed at 1 p.m. There is no mystery mongering about him, but true stories are narrated whenever devotees assemble together. Here is a story: The wife of a car driver, employed by an Engineer, had to undergo confinement. The doctors attending on her feared that a

caesarean operation was inevitable. Then Swami Kesavaiahji gave some *Udhi* to the pregnant lady and asked her to keep it with her always. She did so and afterwards delivered easily and naturally while the doctors were awaiting the senior doctor to arrive for the operation.

Before concluding, I wish to quote what Sri B. V. Narasimha Swamiji, another devotee who spread the Baba's message in the South, has said of Swami Kesavaiahji.

'Sri S. B. Kesavaiah is an ardent Sai Bhaktha and special features of his devotion are not merely the intensity of his concentration when he is seated at pujas, for hours in front of Sri Sai Baba's portrait but also its resultant benefits. One remarkable feature of his pujas, especially on Thursdays, is this. Soon after the concentration in puja ends, he throws open the doors of the puja room to let in the visitors kept out till then.'

'The words that come out of his lips and addressed to them at that time often reveal a knowledge of things occurring far away and unknown to him. He has also often made statements as to future events that have come out to be true.'

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SRI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI

By

Sri E. Bharadwaja.

Lecturer in English, Madhavadar, Gudur Tq., Nellore Dt., (A.P.)

'Sri Sai Baba' is the name that stuck to an approximately sixteen year old lad who was one day discovered sitting under a neem tree in the outskirts of village Shirdi in Maharashtra. He was handsome, his face aglow with the light of spiritual illumination, perfectly unattached, never knowing fear or anxiety, not asking anyone for food or water, never seeking any shelter besides the tree, at night or in the day, in sun, rain or winter cold, never possessing anything except a clay pipe for smoking tobacco, a tin can for water and the torn clothes on his body. His very sight inspired the discerning native devotees to address him as 'Sai Baba' ('Saint Father'). No one knew his parentage, native place, caste or religion or even his age. He never divulged even the name of His *Guru* to any one. He always kept a fire burning by his side with the help of logs of wood which he personally gathered from the nearby jungles. This was in 1854.

People started flocking around and pestering him with enquiries of his identity. So he left the village as suddenly as he appeared there. No one knew of his whereabouts for about three or four years. Again in 1858 a rich man named Chandbhai Patel, in his wanderings in search of his run-away horse, found him under a mango tree by the roadside. He was dressed in a Kafni and a skull cap, grew long hair and a beard.

The Baba himself beckoned the weary way-farer and told him of the whereabouts of his horse. Then he prepared his chilim (tobacco pipe), and he made water ooze out of the ground by thrusting his staff into it and again took burning charcoal out of the same spot by another blow with the staff! Chandbhai recognised the great powers of the Fakir and took him home in reverence. A little after, Chandbhai took him for a marriage that took place at Shirdi and when devotees saw the Fakir getting down from the cart, they greeted him *Ayeeye Sai* and henceforth the name stuck to him.

Sai Baba lived in a dilapidated mosque in the village. He was like a Moslem Fakir in his dress and ways. He often uttered the phrase *Allahi Malik* (Lord is the Master). Yet he called the mosque *Dwaraka Mai* planted *Tulasi* plant in front of it and allowed Hindus to worship him in their wonted manner. Thus he rose above differences of creed and community.

Sai Baba soon became famous by his power to bless his devotees with relief from sorrows of life. The experiences with which he graced them are legion and (in an article like this) only the most prominent of them can be classified as follows :—

To the devotees of various Hindu deities he gave darshan in the form of their respective deities like Rama, Maruthi, Dattatreya and Vittal of Pandari.

“ The Guru is all the gods ”, he said and thus Sai Baba, the Guru, is all the gods.

To the disciples of various saints like Sri Swamy Samarth of Akkalkote, Narasing Maharaj, he proved his spiritual identity with those Masters. Thus he was all the saints.

He also proved his identity with various Sadhus and Fakirs through similar experiences.

He proved his identity with men of all castes and creeds and even all the animals. He revealed joy and sorrow for the help or harm done to them by his devotees even in far off places.

He was one with even the so called inanimate object like images of deities and even pictures that are worshipped. When any of his devotees devoutly offered any food as *naivedya* to such objects of worship in his house in far off towns or cities, Baba referred to the same even while he was seated at Shirdi.

He knew all that took place anywhere through his omniscience and even the happenings within the hearts and minds of people in far off places were clear to him as daylight.

His power to assume different mysterious forms in far off places to help his devotees out of danger even while physically being at Shirdi was phenomenal. His power to bless his devotees with health, wealth, offspring or even spiritual illumination was simply marvellous. Several devout Moslems among his devotees became great mystics with his blessings and many Hindus became perfect saints with his touch of grace. H. H. Swami Kesavaiahji of Shenoyanagar is one.

The innumerable instances of Sai Baba's physical manifestation before his devotees

long after his Mahasamadhi (1918) are an assurance to his devotees that he will guide, correct and protect them even from his Samadhi. There are two of Baba's sayings which touch every heart. “ I will give you what you ask of me till you ask me what I want to give you ”; “ Look to me and I look to you ”. These are the fulfilment of another of his assurances, “ Why fear when I am here? Throw all your burdens on me and I shall cheerfully bear them for you ”. So he did while in flesh and so he does even to-day. And the skill of casting burdens on him lies in our remembering him constantly with love and gratitude and in mentally offering him everything that we eat or drink before we partake of it.

Like the holy ganges which, flowing from the matted hair of Lord Siva, has sanctified the whole of this country for ages, the grace of Sri Sai Baba, having entered the heart of Sri Kesavaiahji, has been sanctifying the lives of thousands of people, affording material and spiritual comfort to them.

Sri Sai Baba's choice of an ordinary government employee as one of the fit recipients of his grace is not without sufficient reasons. In fact the whole life of Sri Kesavaiahji amply proves that he deserved it. As an official he won the respect of every one by his honesty and competence. He was known for his fearlessness. Yet he was kind and sympathetic in his duties towards the poorer section of the society. From all this we can see that Sri Swami Kesavaiahji was making himself a fit receptacle of divine grace which was his.

He was as westernised in his dress, habits and ideas as any other young man of his age. He even questioned how God could be dwelling in stone idols and how offering of coconut to them could be of any use. Was it not better, he asked, to

use that money to help the poor instead? Yet his desire to know the truth through ruthless investigation was phenomenal.

The call of God comes in the most unexpected of ways and so it came to Kesavaiahji too in 1939.

Two mystic experiences he had at Palani and Rameswaram opened up the springs of mystic powers that lay dormant in the heart of Sri Kesavaiahji. Henceforth whenever he looked at any one he could clearly 'see' everything about the person's past, present and future. And he could hardly restrain

himself from speaking out what he saw. If he foresaw any impending misfortunes in store for the other person, he could even prescribe certain steps to mitigate or even avert them. By May 1939 Sri Kesavaiahji concluded his pilgrimages and returned to Dharmavaram. On 1-7-1939, Sri Sai Baba graced Sri Kesavaiahji with His darshan. Thus an account of the Founder President of Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam, Shenoy-nagar. His Holiness Swami Kesavaiahji's life after 1-7 1939 forms an inseparable part of the account of Sri Sai Baba's spiritual glory which is active even decades after His Mahasamadhi.

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SRI SURAIKKAI SWAMIGAL

(The Sage of Narayanavaram)

Dr. V. A. DEVASENAPATHI, M.A., Ph.D.,

Jivanmuktas may be engaged in religious austerities (*tapas*); they may be engaged in commercial pursuits; they may be rulers of countries; they may go about begging for alms', says a Tamil philosophical classic. Whatever their external appearance and the role they choose to play in society, their common characteristic is that they are God-conscious all the time. Even if their mind is agitated occasionally, these agitations disappear almost the very second they appear without affecting the mind. The *Jivanmuktas* live in society but are not of it, they are like water drops on a lotus leaf. They show themselves as ordinary people and do not display their scholarship. With their hearts filled with bliss, they may even appear to be dumb, maintaining silence (*mouna*)

Sri Suraikkai Swami moved about begging for alms, never claiming to be the great soul (*mahatma*) that he really was. He attained *samadhi* on 8th August 1902, at what appeared to be a ripe old age, though no one knows how old he really was. Practically nothing is known about his place of birth and other antecedents. His original name seems to have been Ramaswami. But he was known to the people in the Nagari-Nagalapuram-Narayanavaram area he moved about as Suraikkai Swami because he carried about with him, besides an axe and some old cloths, the shells of bottle gourds (*suraikkai*-in Tamil). In one of the verses of Arulkavi Sethuraman, now Sadhu Ram—sung in a state of inspiration before a picture of Sri Suraikkai Swami on 23rd July 1962, there is a reference to the

bottle gourds and axe saying that he carried them with some significance. It may be that the axe which he used to split knotted wood for the *agni kundam* signified the need to burn up our mental states in the fire of knowledge. Similarly the bottlegourd may also have a significance. A bottlegourd that is not used up as curry cannot be retained long if the pulp in it is not removed. Once the pulp is removed and the empty shell exposed to the heat of the sun, it can last a long time as a container for anything we want to store. Likewise with our lives. So long as the messy pulp of 'I' and 'mine' (*ahankara, mamakara*) fills our soul, we are fit for nothing and indeed we deteriorate in over nature. But once we get the 'I' and 'mine' out (self-naughting) we are filled with God-consciousness and become a dynamo to radiate divine energy for the benefit of the world. Suraikkai Swami conveyed this message through his simple words about the need for salt and sugar. Salt is detachment (*vairagya*) But we are not to withdraw ourselves from the world, giving up our obligations. We must be mentally detached even while we are in the thick of life. At the same time action must be done with love for all beings (*sugar*) The Swami ever and on and on insisted on the need to do good always. He went about doing good in all possible ways. He would dig up springs for public use in the rivulet in Narayanavaram. He cured diseases sometimes with simple remedies, sometimes by his spiritual powers. But he never claimed credit for the cure. Occasional demonstrations of

his spiritual powers which people witnessed were performed without the least trace of egoism. In Arulkavi Sethuram's verses, there is one which refers to these performances as totally devoid of egoism. To clinch this truth, three words are used to refer to egoism. (*Munaippu, anava and tarukku*) He gave directions to those engaged in spiritual pursuits encouraging them to advance farther along the road. Though he helped people by curing diseases and with guidance in solving domestic and official problems, his regret was that very few—practically none, cared 'to dig deep' - i.e. help themselves from his substantial spiritual resources.

A book published in 1911 contains two parts, the first giving a brief sketch of his life, miracles, powers of clairvoyance etc. and the second consisting of the personal experiences of many devotees. The Sage passed out of sight in 1902 but from beyond the veil, he is still guiding and helping

people in various ways. There is a shrine where *puja* is performed every day. His *gurupuja* comes off in Sukla Panchami tithi, under the star *hastham* in the Tamil month of Adi (between 15th of July and 15th of August). The celebration goes on for more than ten days.

Those who have not had the blessing of having *darsan* of the Swami, or *Darsan* of other *mahatmas*, like Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, may derive consolation and strength from worshipping in their shrines. We must be grateful that an institution like Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam under the direct guidance of Sri Swami Kesavaiahji is actively engaged in radiating the blessings of Sri Sai Baba. We can echo the sentiment of Sri Tyagaraja '*entharo mahanuḥhavulu*, and of Sundarar 'obeisance to all devotees! May the world benefit from the ministrations of the Sages and saints! May their tribe increase!'

" What is religion —
if kindness has no place in it?
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is an undeniable urge
And the chief source of Religion."

—BASAVESWARA

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THE CHOSEN APOSTLE

By

Sri C. P. Venugopal

Ad. orate, Mysore

The Supreme Lord, who creates the Universe out of Himself, sustains it and withdraws it unto Himself when He so desires, was born as Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, for the sake of humanity. God is born on earth even as man so that man may be uplifted to God-hood. Sri Sai Baba attracted people in need and in distress and gave them relief and liberation. He chose different personalities to be used as different types of instruments. Sri Swami Kesaviahji belongs to this category. He is a Jnani, a liberated soul, yet he is at the same time a Bhakta of the highest order. He is a perfect instrument of the Lord. Yet, by absolute surrender he has become one with the Supreme Power. Verily, he is the chosen Apostle of the Saint of Shirdi, the the supreme Lord.

I had the unique privilege and good fortune of knowing and coming into close contact with Swamiji since the year 1935 at Anantapur where he was working as Sub-registrar and I was a practising Advocate and Official Receiver there. In those days Swamiji was a different person in outlook and appearance. He wore western clothes, was honest and hard working, and his habits and ideas were such that none of us, close to him, ever thought that he would turn out to be the great devotee, he is today.

It was on 1-7-1939 that the great revelation came upon him at Dharmavaram in that Dt., where he was working as Sub-registrar. At the railway station a friend of his casually

mentioned to him the name of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi and the wonders that were happening there. On hearing this Swamiji felt the urge and the Divine call. That night he had a vision and the next day he received a photo of Sri Sai Baba and Udhi. This was the signal for the great change in his life that was to follow. He continued in Govt. service and did pooja at his residence every Thursday evening. Soon, people gathered at his residence hearing of his miraculous powers of healing and every Thursday long queue was formed in the evening waiting for his Darshan and Blessings. People were wonder struck with the sudden emergence of his spiritual powers and he was looked upon as a great saviour. Swamiji did immense spiritual service both at Dharmavaram and later at Penukonda in the same Dt., and his name and fame spread far and wide. He is an embodiment of patience and the Divinity in him has attracted millions not only, the poor and the low but also the high personages like Governors, Ministers, Judges of the High courts and other dignitaries who sought his Darshan and Blessings; He treated all alike without any distinction of status caste or creed. The late Sri B. V. Narasimhaswamiji who was at that time spreading the gospel of Sri Sai Baba in the south once came to Dharmavaram and met Swamiji. After half an hour's talk with Swamiji he came out and told those present, that ' Baba will use him as His instrument '. It came true.

Swamiji's Poojas both at Dharmavaram and Penukonda in those days are still vivid in my memory. On Thursday evenings he would sit in his Pooja room behind closed doors in front of Baba's portrait and involve himself in deep meditation for hours on end. The devotees gathered on these occasions would be patiently waiting outside in long queue's in pin drop silence waiting for Swamiji to appear after Pooja. It was commonly believed that the devotee who gets the first Darshan of Swamiji immediately he opens the Pooja room would be fortunate. Oftentimes there used to be a scramble for place on these occasions. Swamiji would call the devotees one by one into the pooja room and bless him by touching his forehead and putting the hand on the head and a pinch of the sacred Udhi into his or her mouth. People used to be greatly benefited by the Darshan and their faith in Swamiji was immense. At Penukonda Swamiji was responsible for the construction of a Sai Mandir which is a standing monument of the spiritual services rendered in those parts.

In 1949 Swamiji was transferred to Madras. He conducted his Thursday Poojas here also and established the Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam, a registered body, in 1959. After coming down to Madras Swamiji fell seriously ill with suspected T. B. The disease appeared to be incurable. Sri Sai Baba wanted His instrument to be spared and no wonder Swamiji was soon cured of the disease. His Thursday Poojas, and the Guru Poornima, Mahasamadhi and Sri Rama Navami celebrations are annual features at 'Sai Nilayam'. They have been well attended and the spiritual services rendered on these occasions have been remarkable.

The imposing Mandir we see today is the result of long and arduous endeavours by Swamiji against odds and is the culmination of a life's ambition. All Glory is Swamiji's. May the Supreme Sri Sai Baba Bless Sri Swami Kesavaiahji with long life and continue to use him as His instrument for the sake of humanity.

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SRI RAMANUJA

Dr. R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

(Reader, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras)

There are many points of similarity between Sankara and Ramanuja as preceptors of the Vedantic tradition. Both of them accept the authority of the *prasthanatraya*, viz., the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma-sutra* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Both of them expound their system of Vedanta on the basis of scripture (*śruti*), reason (*nyukti*), and experience (*anubhava*). Just as Sankara is not the founder of Advaita, even so Ramanuja is not the founder of Visishtadvaita. Just as Sankara in establishing the truth of Advaita follows in the footsteps of Gaudapada, so also Ramanuja, in vindicating the truth of Visishtadvaita, follows in the footsteps of Yamuna. What Sankara is to Advaita, Ramanuja is to Visishtadvaita. Though there were illustrious predecessors before them, they played a very significant role as consolidators of their respective systems. Without remaining aloof, both of them were intensely active, going round the country, and established spiritual centres in the different parts of the country with a view to spreading their message to the people at large.

Ramanuja accepts not only the authority of the Vedas, but also that of the *Divyaprabandha*, popularly known as the Tamil Veda. The teaching of the Vedic sages (*rishis*) and the mystic-saints (*Alvars*) is the same. Ramanuja systematized the two traditions of Vedanta, the one from the Sanskrit source and the other from the Tamil source, and synthesized philosophy and religion. Visishtadvaita and Sri Vaishnavism go together, the former emphasizing the philosophical side and the latter the religious

side. Though for the purpose of analysis, we do make a distinction between philosophy and religion, the two cannot be kept apart. Philosophy is not only theory, but practice as well. Visishtadvaita and Sri Vaishnavism constitute an integral whole, the one supplementing the other. It was the great genius of Ramanuja to have integrated the two traditions of Vedanta, and so the appellation, *Ubhaya Vedanta*, is given to the school of Ramanuja and his followers. Ramanuja is known not only as an *Ubhaya Vedantin*, but also as the *Udayavar*. He practised the philosophy which he professed. He knew the goal which is farther away and the way which one must tread in this world in order to reach the divine destination. And so he was called the *Udayavar*, the owner of the two worlds. Among the works which Ramanuja wrote, the most important one from the philosophical point of view is his *Sri bhashya* which is a commentary on the *Brahma-sutra*. Ramanuja is at his best in this work. Though he did not write separate commentaries on the *Upanishads*, he has set forth in detail the significance of the important texts from the *Upanishads* in the course of his commentary on the *Brahma-sutra* itself. His *bhashya* on the *Brahma-sutra* is elaborate, lucid, and brilliant. Ramanuja is, therefore, known as the *Bhashyakara* the author of the *Bhashya*, in the Visishtadvaita tradition. The *Gita-bhashya*, the *Vedartha-sangraha*, and the *Saranagati-gadya* are his other important works.

To Ramanuja, Brahman or God is the supreme reality; and the *jiva* and the world,

which are real, are not only inseparably related to, but also are dependent on Brahman. Brahman, the supreme reality (*tattva*) is non-dual. But it does not remain in splendid isolation. It is qualified on the one hand by the *jiva*, and on the other by the world. The term *Visishtadvaita* means the "non-dualism of the qualified". It means that Brahman, which is non-dual, is inseparably related to the *jiva* and the world. Reality is an organic whole. While Brahman or God is the *saririn*, both the *jiva* and the world are the *sarira*. Consider the case of the human body and the way in which the sentient principle called the self is related to it. The human body (*sarira*) is supported and controlled by the indwelling spirit (*saririn*) in it. The former is in a subordinate relation to the latter. Since the *jiva* and the world are supported and controlled by Brahman, they constitute the cosmic body (*sarira*) of Brahman. They are also dependent on Brahman. *Visishtadvaita* may, therefore, be characterized as organismic non-dualism. Brahman, according to Ramanuja, is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. As the material cause, Brahman is the support (*adhara*) of both the *jiva* and the world. As the efficient cause, it is the inner controller (*niyanta*) of both the *jiva* and world. Brahman is *visishta* (the qualified) in another sense also. According to Ramanuja, Brahman is endowed with infinite auspicious attributes. Brahman, that is to say, is *saguna*. The *Upanishads* refer to Brahman as *nirguna* not in the sense that it is free from attributes, but in the sense that it is free from attributes which are profane, i.e., attributes associated with *prakriti*.

It is necessary on the part of the *jiva* not only to understand the truth (*tattva*), but also to pursue the path of discipline which is conducive to its good (*hita*). The spiritual aspirant must first of all practise *karma-yoga*.

which must be followed by *jnana-yoga*. There is finally *bhakti-yoga* which is the means to liberation. The other terms for *bhakti* are *upasana* and *dhyana*. *Bhakti*, which means loving devotion, consists in ceaseless remembrance of God, which must be practised till the last moment of one's life. Ramanuja compares the practise of the ceaseless remembrance of God to the uninterrupted flow of oil.

It must be borne in mind that the practice of *bhakti* is not an easy affair. Following the *Vakyakara*, Ramanuja enumerates the sevenfold condition of eligibility for the practice of *bhakti*, which is undoubtedly stiff. The seven conditions are: (1) *viveka* or the purification of the body, (2) *vimoka* or freedom from desire and anger, (3) *abhyasa* or the continuous remembrance of God as the indwelling self, (4) *kriya* or the performance of duties, (5) *kalyana* or the practice of virtues, (6) *anavasada* or freedom from despair, and (7) *anuddharsha* or absence of exaltation. A spiritual aspirant must fulfil these seven *sadhana*s (*sadhana-saptaka*) if the practice of *bhakti* is to be fruitful.

Prapatti or surrender is the alternative path that is prescribed for those who find it difficult to practise *bhakti-yoga*. The only requirement for *prapatti* is the realization of one's helplessness and the absolute confidence in the saving grace of the Lord. There is Sri Krishna's declaration in the *Bhagavad-gita* (XVIII, 66): "Renounce all *dharma*s and take refuge in me. I shall release you from all sins. Grieve not."

A spiritual aspirant who follows the path of *bhakti* or *prapatti* attains the highest end (*purushartha*), viz., communion with God called *sayuiya* at the termination of this life.

The theism of Ramanuja takes an integral view of *tattva*, *hita*, and *purushartha* which are inseparable.

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“WHO IS SRI SAI BABA ”

Sri J. N. Bose,

Cost-Accountant Calcutta

There are many views regarding who is Sri Sai Baba. Hindus regarded him as one of their Saints and Muslims took Him for one of their Pirs. The life story of Sri Sai Baba can be no better narrated than in His own words wherein we get the answer.

I am God I am Mahalaxmi, I Speak the truth sitting as I do in the Mosque, I am Vithoba I am Shirdi I am Ganapathy All offerings made to Ganapathy have reached me I am Dattatreya I am Laxmi Narayan Why go for Ganga elsewhere Hold your Palm at my feet Here flows Ganga I am Maruti

Sri Sai Baba's religion is the harmony of all religions. In the limited space of the dilapidated Masjid, His devotees were permitted to perform their religious rites according to their own religion simultaneously on the same floor of Dwarkamayee when Lord Sai was in mortal coil. Hindu devotees offered puja by pasting Sandal Paste on Sri Sai Baba's forehead. Muslims offered Namaz on the Western Wall of the Dwarkamayee while Parsis offered their puja and religious rites in His ever burning Dhuni. These peculiar types of religious rites and practices can never be seen in other parts of India, and nay in the world.

Sri Sai Baba is omniscient. He helps His devotees in various ways and by His unseen hands. Though Sri Sai Baba's form is invisible to us now, if the devotees believe in Him, they get living experiences from Him. Sometimes He appears before His devotees in dreams and gives directions in order to solve their problems and relieve them on their diseases.

Swami Kesavaiahji was a Sub-Registrar at Penukonda when he came in touch with me in connection with serious illness of my son late lamented Himadri. With the blessings of Swamiji my son Himadri fully recovered at that time, i.e. sometime in 1942-43. Since then I am still in correspondence with him. We came to know the miracles of Baba from Swamiji and due to his inspirations my son late Himadri wrote some books on Lord Sai Baba before his demise.

I had the privilege of visiting the Sai Mandir at Shenoy Nagar sometime in 1971. That was Thursday and at that time Swamiji was offering puja to Lord Sri Sai Baba inside the Mandir. After the puja when he came outside he saw me and called me inside the Mandir. As soon as I entered the Mandir he placed the Auspicious Tikka on my forehead and blessed me and my family in presence of Baba's portrait of which I got a photograph. This Tikka as you know is invaluable for every Sai devotee and to have this on their foreheads thousands and thousands of devotees come on every Thursday at the Mandir Site. I have seen with my own eyes that devotees of all classes, i.e. Judges, Magistrates, Doctors, Political Leaders and other distinguished visitors, waiting eagerly for Swamiji in the open field. A thrill of joy passed on me when I came to know that construction of a Sai Mandir in front of his residence has now been completed.

In this connection it would not be out of place to mention that I made it a duty from last three decades to worship the feet of

Swamiji by washing it with Ganges water every morning firmly believing that Baba Himself has appeared in his guise who cures the ills of the devotees and guides them to the path of God realisation. He has been writing numerous books on Sri Sai Baba and preaching for the last three decades the holy messages of Him and in this way

he has dedicated his life to the services of suffering humanity.

In conclusion I would take this opportunity to express our gratitude and indebtedness to him for enabling us to realise the message of Sri Sai Baba and thereby uplifting our morals and therefore would like to advise all Sai devotees to surrender themselves to Swamiji and make him their Sad Guru.

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SHIRDI OF THE SOUTH

Sri Devata Subba Rao

Dr. Judge Rtri

"Why fear when I am here. Cast all thy burdens on me and I shall bear them". This was the great assurance given by BABA, before He entered *Maha Samadhi*. Exactly the same assurance was given by the *Geetacharya* when Kaliyuga had just made its appearance, on the great battle field-the *Karma Bhumi* - of Kurukshetra.

"*Ananyas Chintayanto mam ya Janah Paryupasate
Tesham Nityabhiyuktanam Yogakshemam
Vahamyaham*" (9-22)

"*Sarva Dharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam
Vraja*" (18-66)

The lord then, now, or at any time demands the complete surrender of the devotee. No half way to it. A half hearted attempt is bound to be a very feeble one and naturally does no good to any one. Unless the devotee's mind is atune with BABA, the infinite, he cannot expect results.

Since more than three decades, Swami Kesavaiahji has been putting into practice as a *Nishkama Karmi*, the promise made by BABA, where ever he was. He is in complete communion with BABA always and more so after the *Pooja*, on Thursdays. On Thursdays one would find BABA in the physical form of Swamiji, His chosen media. My experience was that I was seeing and hearing BABA in Swamiji on Thursdays after the *Pooja*, when Swamiji would be having the cosmic vision. It is obvious that BABA reveals himself to Swamiji on those days. It was indeed a day of blessing and good fortune for the devotees in the south, when Swamiji was shifted to Madras from Penukonda in or about 1949.

Swamiji at Madras is more easily accessible to the devotees, which number runs to thousands on Thursdays.

Sai Nilayam at Shenoy Nagar is another Shirdi. It was always my experience and I am sure the experience of all the devotees, to feel and experience the same thrill and bliss at Sai Nilayam as I used to experience at the Booty Mandir at Shirdi. I and my family have been enjoying the bliss of Sai Bhakti since 1940 and my experiences were countless. BABA never failed me and mine. I have been enjoying the same kind of bliss in the presence of Narasimha Swamiji and Kesavaiahji. In fact it was Narasimha Swamiji who had introduced Kesavaiahji, in absentia, in 1943, when I had the honour and pleasure of having him as my guest for a day. Many were the occasions when I used to write Kesavaiahji on my problems and obtain immediate and beneficial advise.

In 1966 March when I was working as District Judge Chittoor, Swamiji summoned me to deliver a talk during the Sri Rama navami celebrations, at a time when Smt. Kesavaiahji was lying critically ill in a nursing home. Yet like the true *Jnana Yogi* he is, he was most unperturbed and took the leading part in the celebrations, as usual. A few days there after the sad news of her demise came in the papers. I have never come across such unflinching courage, composure and *Titiksha*. That day when I was taken into the sanctum sanctorum of Sai Nilayam, Swamiji touched on my head and when I closed my eyes I had the most glorious vision of Lord Venkates-

wara. I make no difference between BABA and Venkateswara; as both the forms continue to fascinate me.

On another occasion I had the *darshan* of Swamiji in the company of another friend. Immediately on seeing my friend Swamiji said, "Oh! this man is in great trouble". My friend, on hearing this, broke down and cried like a child. I told Swamiji "Swamiji, people come to you only when they are in trouble and you have to save them". Swamiji blessed him and within a few months most of my friend's pressing problems have disappeared. On another occasion one of my then subordinates came with me for Swamiji's *darshan*. That friend was expecting promotion as District Judge. On seeing him Swamiji said, "He is a good man but an unkind master has written some thing against him some time back. Any way he would be getting his promotion very soon". We were both surprised that some body could have written against such a good officer. He was an honest officer with good character as well as reputaion. On enquiry, it was revealed that a venomous District Judge had written against this officer some years ago. Some

people sting without any cause. The bad remark has been brushed aside and the officer got his promotion without any difficulty or delay. Swamiji sends me *UDHI* when ever I write him and this gives me peace and wards off troubles. Once when my darling grandson fell ill, I wrote Swamiji a frantic letter and immediately a packet of *UDHI* came by post along with instruction. This brought my confidence back and in no time the child completely recovered.

SAI BABA BHAKTA SAMAJAM at Madras has been rendering yeoman ,service and solace to the innumerable devotees in the south. Swamiji is *Niradambara* and does not make any tall claims, which he could have easily and convincingly made. He serves people in all humility and without any discriminations or reservations. Big or small are alike to him. Every one has to stand in the queue. It is too true that after Thursday *Pooja* one would see and hear BABA in this great and unostentatious soul. May he live long to bring solace and succour to every one. The *Sai Mandir* is an excellent monument to Swamiji's spirit of service. It is a poem of service in concrete, which thrills and throbs the hearts of countless SAI devotees.

"Prayer should certainly be in one's own tongue. Silent prayer is often more effective than loud recitations. Prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered."

— H. H. SWAMI KESAVAI AHJI

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SRI SWAMI SAMARTH OF AKKALKOTE

By

Sri E. Bharadwaja,

Lecturer in English Vidyannagar, Gudur Tq., Nellore Dt. (A P)

The fourth *avatar* of Lord Dattatreya in the age of Kali is Sri Swami Samarth of Akkalkote in Maharashtra. The Swami arrived at Akkalkote in 1856. No one knew his parentage, name, age or caste. Though he was very old, his body was youthful and free from wrinkles. Sweet and kind in speech, his actions were wayward like those of a child. Ever steeped in the bliss of Self, he seemed always to be in a frenzy. Very tall, with broad shoulders and long arms, big belly and piercing eyes, he was a striking figure. His earlobes were prominent and they shook at the slightest movement of his head. His eyebrows were completely grey. His feet were long. He wore the devotional mark on the forehead and a cod piece was his only dress. He wore a rosary containing *Tulasi* beads, *rudraksha* and a crystal. He had earrings. He was always found muttering something to himself some of which were hymns from Vedas. He would address trees, stones and animals with love and seemed to understand their mute language. He never had any fixed routine like a regular bath or daily prayer. He sat in any stray place like a road, cremation ground or royal palace. He mingled and played with children or often behaved madly, reminding one of Sri Shankara's description of the ways of a perfect sage — *balonmattha pisaachavat*. When people enquired about his personal details he answered them in different ways. Now he said he was a *Shudra* and again he said he was a *Yajurvedi* Brahmin. Often he said

of himself, "I am the Spirit that has created all, the banyan tree, the Original Being, the origin of Origin (*Mulapurusha*, *Vatavriksha*, *Mula*). I am from Dattanagar".

His words revealed that he wandered extensively in all the holy places in India such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Hardwar in Himalayas, Varnasi, Calcutta, Puri, Jagannath, Udipi, Sahyadri and Girnar in the North, Mathapur, Karveer, Panchaleswar, Audumbar, Karanjnagar, Nrisimhawadi, Begumpu, Mohol, Gangpur, Mangalvedha in Central India and Maharashtra and Rameswaram in the South. His occasional uttering that his name was Nrisimha Bhan, and that he came from *Kadalivan* (the famous and holy plaitain grove in Sri Sailam) reveal that he was none other than the second avathar of Lord Dattatreya. Sri Nrisimha Saraswati who lived at Gangapur before disappearing in Kadalivan in the fifteenth century. The devotees that practised austerities near the Dattapadukas at Gangapur were often divinely directed by Lord Dattatreya to the Swami who was His manifestation in flesh and blood.

When he first arrived at Akkalkote in 1856 he sat near the gateway of the town for three days without food or water. On the fourth day one Ahmed Ali Khan tried to play a prank on this apparent lunatic by offering him an empty clay pipe with fire in it as a pipe of tobacco. The swami gratefully received the same and when he

puffed at it, lo, there was tobacco smoke gushing from his nostrils! Ahmed Ali Khan realized that the strange visitor was indeed a great saint. He at once arranged for the Swami's lunch at a local Brahmin's house but the Swami would not eat till the Moslem touched his plate!

In an article like this only very few of his astounding miracles can be just enlisted without going into details. He knew every thought that passed anyone's mind and everything that transpired anywhere. He could present himself in several places simultaneously. He knew the past and present, be it of an individual or a country. Every playful gesture of his indicated a major political event that was due to occur in the country. He revived several dead people. He humbled the pride of arrogant scholars by making a blind, stupid, boy answer all their scholarly queries with citations from scriptures. He could command the clouds to rain or the fires to burn even while he poured water on it. He could cure people of terrible physical deformities by just touching the effected part in their dream-visions. He could take an elephant that ran amock into tame submission or a mischievous monkey into courteous conduct. The Rajahs of various states vied with one another to keep him in their estates and when one of them planned to kidnap him in a closed palanquin, he vanished from it! He could feed

thousands of devotees with food prepared for only forty guests. With a slap of his hand or with a look or word he elevated atleast fifteen of his devotees to his own level of spiritual illumination and power and each of these able were able to perform all such miracles spontaneously. Without his will cameras failed to photograph him or if they did the picture obtained was that of a monkey! He told his devotees of his approaching end and took Mahasamadhi like a true Yogi in 1878. And what is more, he manifested himself physically before the devotees even after his physical death. His Samadhi Mandhir, his *padukas*, hukka, his bed, the padukas he materialised mysteriously for his devotees, the banyan tree of which he was very fond can all be seen today at Akkalkote.

Our interest in the Swami is that both he and his contemporary Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi claimed that they were inwardly identical with one another. Both rose above differences of caste and community. And both of them are Avatars of Lord Dattatreya. It was only with the blessings of Sri Sainath that the writer of this sketch could write the account of Sri Swami's astounding life-divine in English, *The Supreme Master* which was blessed by various saints at various stages of its composition and no wonder that a devout reading of it has blessed many of my friends with spiritual experiences.

NOTE.—Those who are interested to know more about the Swami can find a detailed account in the book, *The Supreme Master* (XVI plus 95 pages) Price Rs. 2-75. Copies can be had from the author.

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RANGANATHA RAMAYANAM

By

Dr. C. R. SARMA.

There is a proverb in Telugu which says :
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If you want to eat, eat the crisp *vada*. ' *Vinto*
Sharatam Vinali, Unte garelu tinali '.

This interesting proverb must have come into vogue on account of the immense popularity of the Telugu version of the *Mahabharata* written by the famous *Kavitraya* poet-trio. In fact this outstanding poem is at once an authority for usage and a book of knowledge in Telugu. The twin poets, Tirupati Venkata Kavulu, have rightly remarked that it is a *Veda* to the Telugu writers and even today it is read over and over again and enjoyed.

Despite the above observations, it may be mentioned that the story of Rama as narrated by Valmiki has attracted the Telugu people and writers as well. There is not a village worth its name in Andhra Pradesh which does not have a *Rama mandir* (temple). Every year the birth day of Rama, *Rama navami*, is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the Telugu region. Further, the customs of invoking Rama's blessings while giving bath to children and of singing the song ' *Anandamaye anandamaye* (describing Rama's marriage) during weddings while the *mangala sutra* is tied are prevalent among the Telugu families.

The story of Rama either complete or in parts is narrated in Telugu in almost all literary forms — *Kavya*, *dvipada*, *sataka*, *Yakshagana*, *dandaka*, *samkirtana* etc. The story is also preserved in proverbs and phrases. All this will show that the Telugu mind is a strong hold of Rama cult and that the

influence of the Ramayana on Telugu literature is powerful and unbroken.

Besides *Adityatma* and *Ananda Ramayana* and a few translations from other languages including Tamil, we have in Telugu several Ramayanas based on Valmiki—*Ranganatha Ramayana*, *Bhaskara Ramayana*, *Udalla Ramayana* and *Katta Varadaraju Ramayana*. Among these *Ranganatha Ramayanam* written in the indigenous metre *dvipada* is generally considered the earliest and complete Ramayana in Telugu. Some critics are of the view that it was written in about 1240. It contains 17,290 *dvipadas* (couplets) or 34,580 lines.

The authorship of this work, like its date, is also open to doubt. Supporting the traditional belief, some believe that it was written by a poet called Chakrapani Ranganatha who attributed it to his royal patron. But Ranganatha's name is nowhere mentioned in the poem. The majority view is that it was composed by a royal poet Gona Buddha at the instance of his father Panduranga Vithalanatha and that the poet named it after the latter, the abbreviated form of whose name being Ranganatha. Hence *Ranganatha Ramayanam* though written by Gona Buddha. It is known from inscriptions that the members of the Gona clan belong to the Reddi community.

Whoever the author may be, *Ranganatha Ramayanam* is a popular poem in Telugu and that it is unique in itself for the following reasons :

1. It is written in the *desi* metre *dvipada* which can be sung and it is the first

and complete Ramayana composed in that metre.

2. Some portions from this poem are usually sung by the performers of shadow Play (*tholubommata*) Thus it is popular with masses also.
3. Even a casual reader will find in this poem several episodes or details which are not found in *Valmiki Ramayana* but prevalent in the Telugu folk-lore.
4. Ravana and the members of his family are portrayed in this poem in brighter colours.

Gona Buddha Reddi is a scholar-poet. He is referred to as *Kavi sarvabhooma* (Emperor of Poets), *Kavi Kalpataru* (Kalpa tree for poets) and *Kavilokabhoja* (the well-known Bhoja who patronised several Sanskrit poets). It is evident from these epithets that he is not only a distinguished poet but a keen student of the Ramayana. Buddha Reddi draws inspiration mainly from Valmiki's poem though a good number of non-Valmiki episodes are found in his work. Among them, the account of Jambukumara the son of Surpanakha, the story of a squirrel which helped Rama in the construction of the *Setu*, the episode of Sulochana the devoted wife of Indrajit deserve mention. Perhaps, these interesting stories were in vogue in the poet's days and he might have recorded them in his work in order to satisfy the masses.

Indra assumes the form of a cock and crows near the cottage of Gautama, after fulfilling his evil desire with Ahalya he leaves the cottage in his own form, the goddess of sleep approaches Lakshmana and he asks her to stay with his wife Urmila till the exile period was over, Lakshmana draws seven lines around the hermitage and warns Sita not to go beyond them, before leaving Lanka Vibhishana calls on his aged mother Kaikesi, Hanuman, Vibhishana and

others dining with Rama after Coronation was over, Hanuman distributes to the other monkeys the food that was left out in the plate of Rama, the story of Lakshmana's laughter in Rama's Court-are some of the non-Valmiki episodes that are found in the *Ranganatha Ramayanam*

The episode of Surpanakha is brief in *Valmiki Ramayana* while it is somewhat elaborate in *Ranganatha Ramayanam*

According to *Ranganatha Ramayanam*, Surpanakha appears before Rama in her original form. Though she is very angry with him on account of her son's (Jambukumara) death, she falls in love with Rama at the very first sight. Thus the womanly passion in her softens her anger and this seems to be a dramatic change in her approach to Rama. Hence we find the *Ranganatha Ramayanam*, two different aspects in Surpanakha's character. She wants to wreak her vengeance on the person who had killed her son and so her approach to Rama is justifiable and the vengeance harboured against him is also understandable. But she loses the sympathy of the reader when he finds in her a different woman with animal passion.

Now, let us see how Ravana has been depicted in the *Ranganatha Ramayanam*

Apart from mentioning that Ravana is a great warrior, the poet says that his palace was inhabited by wise ministers and persons of good conduct. Though he abducts Sita and tries his best to win her love, he is not interested in her. On the other hand, he only desires to get salvation at the hands of Rama.

A beautiful story, not found in *Valmiki Ramayana* is narrated in Yuddha Kanda in the *Ranganatha Ramayanam*.

Ravana wants to instill fear in the minds of Rama and his followers and so exhibits all the precious articles that he acquired in

battles so as to be noticed by Rama. As expected, Rama looks at them and on enquiry learns from Vibhishana that those precious ornaments were acquired by Ravana by defeating the gods. Then Rama gently aims an arrow at Ravana which removes the necklaces worn by the maids attending on him. His umbrella is broken. But no one is hurt. This surprises Ravana considerably, who forgets for the moment his enmity with Rama and begins to praise his skill in archery. He addresses Rama as *Veeragrihama* the first among the warriors. He thinks there is no one in the world who can excel Rama in archery. The ministers of Ravana become impatient, and they

remarked that an enemy should not be extolled. But Ravana chides them by asking, "should not the greatness of the mighty heroes be extolled?"

This incident brings out the noble quality in Ravana – namely the grace of sportsmanship to appreciate the greatness of a hero even if he be his enemy.

In conclusion *Yanukantana Ramayanam* is a piece of good literature. Brief descriptions and simple but dignified style are the notable features of this poem. To me, it appears that sincere devotion will help any one receive God's blessings is the message of this remarkable poem.

- - -

"Mere birth counts for nothing. It is man's works and character which matter. True nobility is born of humility and one who considers himself to be the servant of all, is a king."

"Numerous instances are found in the pages of Sai Sudha evidencing the wonderful accuracy of several of Sri S. B. Kesavaiah's predictions. If they were all invariably true one would begin to identify him with Sri Sai Baba. Sri S. B. Kesavaiah is frank enough to admit that a few powers (within limits) granted to him by the grace of Sri Sai Baba do not make him a Sai. We must applaud him for his humility, candour and truthfulness"

— H. H. NARASIMHA SWAMIJI.

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Swamiji blessing the Hon'ble Justice Mr. K. Viraswami, Chief Justice on the occasion of his Visit to Sai Nilayam on 16—4—1970.



Seated from left to right : Swamiji & V. Guruswami, Plant Manager, K.C.P. Ltd on the occasion of a meeting held at Vuyyuru, Krishna Dt. A. P. on 29—12—1970.



Swamiji putting Kunkum on the fore head of Sri Sai Baba's idol when Swamiji declared open the Sai Mandir constructed at Vijayawada (AP.) near the Ring Road by Dr. U. Venkataratnam and his Satimani on 16-2-'72

ADDRESS OF WELCOME PRESENTED
TO
H. H. SRI SWAMI KESAVAIAHJI

By

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
Gudur, (Nellore-Dt., A.P.)

REVERED SWAMIJI,

We deem it a unique fortune, privilege and pleasure to Welcome your Holiness here most heartily on this auspicious and inspiring occasion of your kind visit to our place which we have been looking forward considerably for over a long time. The day of 16th March, 1974 has therefore come to acquire a special significance to us, as this is indeed a red letter day in the history of our Sangham to have your Holiness here amidst us and to receive from you directly your valuable message of hope and cheer which we cherish immeasurably.

Our holy land that is BHARATH has a rich heritage of age long spiritual culture and a sacred tradition of spiritual wisdom given by an unbroken succession of spiritual Masters. The influence of these Seers and Saints is felt even at the present times. They contributed by their lives and teachings most precious towards the emancipation of millions of humanity. Similarly we have been beholding with veneration, adoration and admiration your illuminating life as likewise belonging to the family of these holy personages, beautiful in its purity, radiant with love and compassion and all the tenderest qualities of the heart. These exemplary traits possessed by you all the times in your life even from your boyhood in every sphere of your activity, and you have become a shining example of a MAHARISHI.

Your good name has been closely knitted and associated with that of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi who is the God incarnate. He is the embodiment of goodness, kindness, compassion and mercy. He is intent on fulfilling the desires of his devotees. He is a refuge to one and all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. He gave to the Universe a great Cult for the spiritual and material welfare of the people. As the chosen Apostle of Bhagawan Sri Sai Baba you have been spreading His Mission and His Divine Message to the people with your seat of meditation and penance at Shenoyanagar, Madras, which has become a replica of Shirdi. You have become a KRIPA SIDDHA early in life, and ever since for more than three decades now you have been following the footsteps of Sri Sai Baba in serving the cause of humanity by boundless energy affection, and dedication; The powers you are endowed with by the grace of Sri Sai Baba, and yet your humility, candour and frankness make one to identify you with Sri Sai Baba. The spiritual centres you have founded for the worship of Sri Sai Baba at Penukonda and Shenoyanagar in the great structures of Temples and Mandirs speak eloquently of the unlimited grace you have been enjoying of Sri Sai Baba. The great Edifice you are putting up at Shenoyanagar which is stupendously a great structure comprising of a

Shrine, Mandir and Meditation Hall acquiring for the entire area of Shenoyanagar the ennobling greatness of a pilgrimage centre similar to Shirdi with religious atmosphere pervading all round is to say, an incomparable benediction conferred on you by Sri Sai Baba.

Sri Sai Baba Bhaktha Samajam of which you are the Founder President have many lofty ideals for propagating and promoting the teachings and tenets of Sri Sai Baba to the people. The prominent success you have achieved in respect thereto is a standing tribute to your wondrous will power. Every Thursday many devotees throng at "Sai Nilayam" in Shenoyanagar and receive Baba's Udhi and Prasadam from you directly at the Sanctum Sanctorum unmindful of the waiting. The three great functions, viz, SREE RAMANAVAMI, GURU POORNIMA, and SRI SAI BABA'S MAHASAMADHI DAY have become Annual events of celebration at Shenoyanagar,

Gudur, }

16th March, 1974. }

drawing thousands of devotees for your darshan and to hear your message and receive your blessings. You have been thus rendering yeoman and signal service to Sai devotees assiduously following His foot steps in the true spirit of His saying "WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE" and "CAST OFF ALL YOUR BURDENS AND I SHALL BEAR THEM".

PUJYA SWAMIJI! By your gracious presence here today for which we have been yearning continuously we have become a happy and fortunate people. With salutations and fervent prayers to you, we invite you to be pleased to show us the true path of life, and shower on us your blessings and take us into the realms of Bhagawan Sri Sai Ram.

We heartily pray that the Almighty gives you more and more strength and longevity to carry forward His great Mission.

Bow to Shri Sai. Peace to all.

With Pranams, We are,
Your ardent devotees,

DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, GUDUR.

With best compliments from

"Sri Sai Baba often said that, let his man (devotee) be at any distance, a thousand coss, away from him he will be drawn to Shirdi like a sparrow with a thread tied to its feet."

LOKULA KAMALAI AH

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The kind and merciful Sri Sai baba once said the following sweet words in the Maszid "He who loves Me most always sees Me. The world is desolate to him without Me. He tells no stories but Mine. He ceaselessly meditates upon Me and always chants My name. I feel indebted to him who surrenders himself completely to Me and ever remembers Me."



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'GUDUR DEVOTEES SPELLBOUND AS KESAVAIAHJI' UNFOLDS SAI LEELA

His Holiness Swami Kesavaiahji, the Founder-President of Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam (Regd.), Shenoyragar, Madras, at the request of the Divine Life Society visited Gudur on March 16, 1974.

There was a public meeting in the evening at the Andhra Mahila Mandali premises. Swamiji was received at the entrance by the members of Mahila Mandali. The unique feature was that members of the Mahila Mandali, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club and Samskriti Sammelanam also participated in the function organised under auspices of the Divine Life Society.

Sri K. Obayya, I.A.S. Nellore District Collector, presided. At the outset, Sri C. V. Krishnaiah, a local mica magnate, and president of the Divine Life Society welcomed the enlightened gathering of male and female devotees numbering more than 2000, including many officials, (I.A.S. & I.R.S.) and non-officials like Doctors and Lawyers.

Devotees also came from places far and near like Podalakur, Rapur, Vakadu, Venkatagiri, Nayudupeta, Sullurpeta, Nellore, Tirupati, Chittoor, Madras, Anandapur and other places to hear Swamiji and receive his blessings.

GURU PUJA

The Secretary of the Divine Life Society reported the objects and traced the origin and growth of the Society at Gudur. On behalf of the Divine Life Society Guru Puja was done to Swamiji by Mrs. C. V. Krishnaiah. A welcome address in Telugu was presented by the Divine Life Society to

Swamiji which was read by the Secretary Sri C. V. Seshiah. (The English translation of the same is printed separately.)

Sri K. Obayya in his presidential remarks observed that he deemed it a great privilege conferred on him to preside over this sacred function, to have darshan and blessings of Swamiji and to meet so many devotees here. He reminded the people of our great spiritual heritage and called upon them to practise in their daily lives the noble truths and principles laid down by our sages and saints. He stressed the need for a balanced life bringing harmony between materialistic, moral and spiritual life of man.

NO MIRACLE MONGER

Swamiji then addressed the audience and kept them spellbound for over an hour narrating the various anecdotes in the life of Sri Sai Baba and puranas and explained the noble truths in simple language and illumined the hearts of every one that attended. To the lead given by Swamiji all repeated 'Sairam' for a few minutes.

Swamiji observed that it was not easy to understand the leelas of Sri Sai Baba "He is not a miracle monger". The assurance and categorical declaration that he would take care of his devotees who surrender to him, he is just like Lord Krishna. The truly faithful, who are ardent enough, can see him even to-day in his living form irrespective of caste, creed or sex. Mere repetition of his name with staunch faith and singular devotion will do to realise Him. Sri Sai Baba's message is that one should love and serve Him in

all forms and names, Sri Sai Baba was able to draw the residents of Shirdi at first by making the lamps in Dwarakamayi burn with water, when local merchants refused to give him oil.

WHEN RAIN STOPPED

Once a famous lawyer M. W. Pradan, who came to Shirdi wanted to return to Bombay but there was heavy rain at Shirdi and it was difficult for him to go to Kopergaon in the rain and catch the train. He prayed to Sri Sai Baba. As it is said in the 19th verse of 9th Chapter of Bhagwad-geetha, God alone can give rain or withhold it. Sri Sai Baba, his God, came out of Dwarakamayi and addressed the rain in a loud and thunderous voice. "Stop, Stop your fury and be calm." Rain subsided and devotee went to Kopergaon easily, caught the train, attended the court in time won his case.

He said that nobody could escape fate (Karma). Sri Rama had to give up his all and live in exile in forests. Similarly Pandavas had to live in forests despite the fact that Lord Krishna was there at every stage. It was essential that one should do good now to reap spiritual benefits later.

ON WAY TO HAPPINESS

Once Bhimaji Patel, who was suffering from a dreadful disease, was brought to Shirdi and placed before Sri Sai Baba. Sri Sai Baba pointed out that the disease was due to the previous evil karma and was not at first disposed to interfere. But the patient cried out in despair, sought refuge in him as he was his last hope and prayed for mercy. Then Sri Sai Baba's heart melted and said, "Stay, cast off your anxiety, your sufferings have come to an end. However oppressed and troubled one may be, as soon as he steps into the Masjid, he is on pathway to happiness." Sri Sai Baba cured

him by two dreams. In the first dream Bhimaji Patil suffered flogging for not reciting a poem in the school, and in the second dream suffered pain and torture by rolling a stone up and down over his chest.

KARMA RUBBED OFF

Once Dr. Pillai, an ardent devotee of Sri Sai Baba, not able to bear the pain of guinea worms sent word to Sri Sai Baba that the pain was unbearable and prayed to stop the pain and transfer the working of his past Karma to 10 future births of his. Sri Sai Baba sent word: "Tell him to be fearless. In ten days he can wear out the suffering and consequences of his past karma. Bring him here on somebody's back." Dr. Pillai was brought to the Masjid Sri Sai Baba said: "Now a crow will come and peck at you and then you will recover." After some time one devotee Abdul, who was working there turned up and his foot accidentally fell on the wound, pressed it and worms were squeezed. The pain was unbearable and Dr. Pillai bawled out. He asked Sri Sai Baba when the crow will come? Sri Sai Baba said Abdul was the crow. "Go and rest. You will be alright soon." Without any treatment or medicine the disease was completely cured in ten days as told by Sri Sai Baba. Thus Sri Sai Baba intervened in the Karma of an individual and rubbed it out.

Swamiji observed that God will protect the devotees leading a righteous life. So long as there is Justice, God will protect us and mentioned how with the two weapons of truth and non-violence and with faith in Ram-nam and Gita in hand Gandhiji got independence to the country, which is a victory of his spiritual force against the brutal force of the British.

Swamiji narrated how he suffered when he was working as a Sub-Registrar prior to

1939, though he was honest and earned 6 Red entries as a recognition for his hard work, character and integrity in the hands of some unscrupulous people.

He further explained the ecstatic experience he had at Palani before Subramanya Swami few months prior to the vision and Grace of Sri Sai Baba he had on 1-7-1939. He said that by Sri Sai Baba's grace he became his humble devotee. He has visited Shirdi 73 times. Even if he takes 128 births more he cannot become Sri Sai Baba. Swamiji was very kind to the poor from the beginning of his service. Perhaps his kindness, his truthfulness, and purity of character and integrity that has drawn Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi to him while he was working at Dharmavaram, in Anantapur District.

STORY OF PRAHALADA

Swamiji observed that the firm faith in God was the secret of the power of child Prahalada who neither feared nor met with death when he was subjected to the every unimaginable torture. Sri Sai Baba often used to say that once a person had faith in God he had achieved everything. There is nothing greater than faith. Sri Rama who was God himself had to build a bridge to cross the sea to Lanka, but Hanuman who had immense faith in Sri Rama cleared the sea in one jump. Draupadi by her devotion to Krishna and on account of her sacrifice once by sparing the end of her saree to a rishi, who lost his loin cloth in the river, was saved when Kauravas attempted to strip her of her clothing. Loyalty and devotion of Arjuna made Sri Krishna even to break his promise in the battlefield and went to kill Bhishma who was inflicting injuries on his devotee Arjuna, just to save him.

Sri Sai Baba never asked us to worship him alone. On the other hand Sri Sai Baba asked the devotees not to change their

religion or their Guru and not to neglect their worship of Ishta Devatha.

POWER OF MAYA

He enjoined the devotees to do good as that alone accompanied one to the end. "Do not make promises. If made, fulfil the promises at any cost." Sri Sai Baba sacrificed his life for the well being of his devotees.

Once Mr. Kaparde, the well-known barrister, while he was at Shirdi, was in trouble and the British Government wanted to arrest him. Sri Sai Baba was restless till the warrant issued against his devotee was withdrawn.

Speaking about Maya, Swamiji related the incident from Mahabharata. The venerable Bhishma while lying on the bed of arrows in the battle field: was shedding tears. Arjuna could not understand the reason and asked Krishna whether the great Bhishma was shedding tears because he was going to die soon. Bhishma was a great devotee, a mighty warrior who sacrificed his life for the sake of his father, one of the Ashtavasus and to whom the death can come only at his will. Krishna suggested Arjuna to ask Bhishma himself. When questioned, Bhishma said that though Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, was a friend, Philosopher and guide to the mighty Pandavas who are adherent to truth, and though Lord was there always helping them at every stage, there was no end to their misery. This power of Maya he could not understand and was shedding tears, he said.

TO SAVE A CHILD

Once Mrs. Kaparde went to Sri Sai Baba and in a trembling tone told him that her dear young son was down with plague. Sri Sai Baba spoke to her kindly that the

sky was beset with clouds but they would melt away and every thing would be calm. So saying he lifted up his Kurta upto the waist and showed to all present four fully developed bubos and said; "See, now I have to suffer for the sake of my devotees, their difficulties are mine."

One day Sri Sai Baba pushed his arm into the burning Dhuni and his own arm burnt. Devotees dragged him forcibly and asked "Deva for what purpose have you done this." Sri Sai Baba said, the wife of a Blacksmith at some place was working on the bellows of a furnace. Her husband called her. Forgetting the child on her lap, she ran hastily and the child slipped into the furnace. "I thrust my hand into the furnace and saved the child. I am glad that life of the child is saved."

There is no need to be away from one's family or to go into the forests or to study the Puranas or Vedas or live like a saint to understand God and to attain salvation. Sri Sai Baba said that by reading books one gets Bhrama (delusion) and not Brahman (God). One must perform one's duty sincerely taking truth as beacon. No salvation unless one firmly believes in the existence of God and had implicit faith in the mercy of God. Swamiji narrated how he was saved by Sri Sai Baba from the clutches of death in April 1949.

GREAT PROVIDER

Swamiji advised that just as a cod fish lived in mud untouched by it so also we should live in the samsara untouched by it. Just as we clean the body with so many varieties of soaps if we clean our mind and weep for the vision of God, we can see him even to-day in his living form. God's grace could not be purchased. It has to be earned by true devotion and dedicated service.

Once Swami Vivekananda was travelling in a train and there was a Marwadi sitting in the same compartment. The Marwadi had many thing to eat and went on eating and saying at the same time, "I have earned and I am eating. You are a Sanyasi, what can you eat." Sri Rama appeared in a dream to a gentleman at a place and said that a certain Sanyasin Swami was coming in the train and he should take food and water to him Swami Vivekananda after getting down from the train was sitting on a gunny bag. The person came to Swami Vivekananda saying that Sri Rama appeared to him in a dream and asked him to bring these things to him for eating. The moral is, God helps his devotees in many strange ways. Sri Sai Baba said: "I will help those who believe in me. I will not let them down."

Swamiji stressed the efficacy of God's name. Repetition of Lord's name with faith requires no paraphernalia and no restrictions. It is so easy and so effective

NARADA & RUSTIC

Once Narada thought that there was no other greater devotee than himself. Lord sent him to a village where one Ramanna a humble devotee of his was living. Narada found him to be an agriculturist, who rose in the morning, uttered the name of Lord Krishna once and went out with a plough and tilled the ground all day. At night he went to bed after uttering Krishna once more. Narada went back and told Lord of Ramanna. Then Lord asked Narada to take a cupfull of oil in his hands and go round the city. But asked him to be careful that a single drop of oil does not spill. Narada did as told and returned to the Lord. Lord asked him how many times did he think of him in the course of the walk round the city. "Not once", Narada said as he had to watch his cup brimming

over with oil. Lord then told Narada that one cup of oil could divert his attention from Him altogether but the rustic, though carrying the heavy burden of a family still remembered Him twice a day.

TOTAL FAITH

Swamiji said that one should have faith of a child in the mother. Implicit faith in the mercy of God is required. Once a boy frightened to walk alone to the school through the woods told his mother of his fear. She told him not to be afraid and call his elder brother Krishna, when in fear. When he frightened once, he cried out 'Krishna' and began to weep. God could no longer stay away. Krishna appeared and took the boy out of the woods. One day there was a ceremony in the house of his Guru. Every student took some valuable present. This boy asked his mother for a present. She suggested the boy to request brother Krishna. As usual the boy cried out to Krishna and when Krishna appeared, requested him to give him a present. Krishna gave him a small pot of Curd. This the boy took and gave it to his Guru. After receiving valuable presents from others he took the curd pot from this boy. It was a miracle. He could not empty the curd. The more he poured, more the curd was there in the pot. Guru questioned the boy where he could secure such a curd pot. He went along with the boy into the woods to see the boy's elder brother Krishna. The boy cried out to Krishna. Krishna did not turn up. They heard his voice. He could not reveal himself as the boy's Guru had no such faith in Him.

POOR EVERY DAY

Swamiji explained the significance of charity. One should do charity to the needy and deserving but within one's own just means. Let it be a small part of his

earnings. Charity should be given with faith, Love, Modesty and Sympathy. Charity made insolently and without faith can bear no fruit. In order to teach the devotees the lesson of charity, to remove their attachment to money and then to purify their minds, Sri Sai Baba extracted Dakshina from them. As Sri Sai Baba said the peculiarity was that he had to give them ten times more of what he received. Sri Sai Baba used to distribute entire amount received to the poor and the next morning he would be a poor fakir as usual.

We spend lavishly on our friends and relatives. They abuse us for not spending more, behind our back. But when a beggar approaches us, we scold and drive him away. This is not correct. Give if you can. Otherwise do not be harsh. Tell them politely that you are unable to help. Do not borrow to give in charity. It is better not to give than to borrow and give.

AT SRI SAI NILAYAM

Swamiji narrated many other stories quoting from Sai Satcharitra and his own experiences at Sai Nilayam, Shenoy Nagar, which speaks of Sri Sai Baba's greatness. Swamiji pointed out that if anyone was benefited by him, it was all due to Sri Sai Baba's grace.

Once a devotee who was corrupt was trapped. He approached Swamiji for Sri Sai Baba's Grace at Sai Nilayam. At last Sri Sai Baba saved him. Some one asked Swamiji; "Will Sri Sai Baba save a corrupt officer?" Swamiji told him, that Sri Sai will see whether that devotee has done any good in this janma or in any of his previous births, and helps him if he had any merits to his credit.

Once a lady who was mentally ill was brought before Swamiji. He applied Udhi to her forehead and told her that a vow made

to the Lord Venkataramana was not fulfilled and hence the trouble. After she went to Tirupati and cleared her vow, she was all right.

ADVICE TO WOMAN

Swamiji narrated how Sri Sai Baba went many times to the devotees in the form of a dog or an old man and tested their devotion. Sri Sai Baba taught the devotees not to talk ill of any one and not to be jealous of others, never to be lazy or inactive and always be contented and think of God. Sri Sai Baba wanted everyone to do his duty, respect parents and elders, live a disciplined life of truth and honesty. Swamiji called upon the women to look after their children from the very early stages in such a manner that they could be guided on the path of truth and righteousness. Also advised them to live with Bakthi without leaving Dharma and thus do good to themselves and the country. Heartfelt prayer with absolute faith in Him is enough. Even for two minutes in twenty-four hours, if a man

could pray sincerely and earnestly he is sure to secure His grace. God will be far away from untruth. The ill-gotten money will be spent away on sickness etc. Sri Sai Baba will remove Karma of any however strong it may be. Swamiji wished the Divine Life Society to grow from strength to strength and serve the devotees.

Dr. C. R. K. Reddy proposed a vote of thanks. Sri Sai Baba's Udhi got from Shirdi and touched by Swamiji was distributed to all along with prasadam.

At the request of Sri Kakani Chandra Sekhara Reddy, Swamiji stayed at his house at Gudur on Mar. 16 and 17. On Mar. 16, on the way to Gudur, at Nayudupeta members of Divine Life Society, Nayudupeta Branch, and several other devotees met Swamiji and received Udhi and Sri Sai Baba's blessings. Throughout his stay at Gudur in Mr. Reddy's house there was perennial flow of devotees whom Swamiji received individually and gave them words of comfort guidance and blessing of Sri Sai Baba with Udhi and prasadam.

“ Just as a calf follows the cow, so also God follows his devotee.”

—POTANA

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OM SRI SAI RAM

THE INFINITE GRACE OF SRI SAI BABA AT THE SHIRDI OF MADRAS

(Translation from Swadesamitran of 11/12-4-1973)

While thanking his friend for the New Year compliment of a calendar, depicting the graceful picture of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi, a gentleman asked him whether he had been to Shirdi. The friend replied that there was no need for one to go to Shirdi and that true to the words of Sri Sai Baba that he would be helping his devotees even after discarding His mortal coil, Sri Sai Baba was present in Shenoinagar in the form of Swami Kesavaiahji, who was rendering selfless service to the innumerable devotees who throng the place every Thursday evening to get themselves relieved of their physical and mental worries through his healing touch and *udhi*. By the grace of Baba he is the humble Apostle of Sri Sai Baba and through his untiring service and efforts a Mandir cum Meditation hall dedicated to Sri Sai Baba is being put up after overcoming many hurdles and it is almost nearing completion. This chosen devotee of Sri Sai Baba is residing at 116-F, Shenoinagar, opposite to Mandir. It wears the look of a temple and not a house.

If one entertains the doubt whether Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi was an ordinary human being or God-man incarnate, it may not be so easily answered since the same doubt is bound to arise in the case of Lord Krishna, who stood by Arjuna, Lord Buddha, who preached Ahimsa, Jesus Christ who saved the sinners, the prophet Mohamed who gave the Koran, Sage Tiruvalluvar, the author of Tirukkural, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramalinga Swamikal, Mahathma Gandhi and in general all

those who preached or taught or laid down norms for the good conduct and salvation of humanity. Let us try to arrive at a solution to all these doubts.

From prehistoric times to this day, when man is conquering space, there are no two opinions about the invisibility of God. But if one pauses for a while and tries to analyse, one is sure to realise that though men does not see God, God sees all beings and watches every movement of man and his surroundings. Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavat Gita, told Arjuna that whenever injustice and evil forces were rampant in this world He would descend on earth to put an end to them and establish righteousness and justice. Lord Krishna was none else than the Supreme God and His words apply in a great measure to all the saints and seers and thus our doubt automatically solves itself. We are clear in our minds that these holy men are only the chosen disciples or devotees of the Lord, whose sole purpose is to inculcate bhakthi in man kind and relieve their physical and mental sufferings.

All the devotees who go to Shenoinagar and have darshan of Swami Kesavaiahji do realise that they had seen the love of Sri Sai Baba Himself in the form of Swamiji and not the mere human form of Swamiji. The thousands of devotees who present their problems to Swamiji and get relieved of their distress through the sacred Udhi given to them invariably declare that Sri Sai Baba lives and speaks through Swamiji—rather

Swamiji spells out what Sri Sai Baba desires to convey to His devotees.

Let us now hear the true experiences of a few devotees as revealed by them.

BABA IN THE FORM OF A DOG.

"I am S. Vankataramana Rao, a practising advocate of Salem. For the past four and a half years, I was suffering from acute gastric trouble and was vomiting whatever I ate within few minutes. Several doctors examined me and prescribed various medicines which were of no avail. I went to Manthralayam on the banks of the Thungabhadra and rendered service for forty-eight days. I did not find any relief from my ailment. At last through the good offices of my lawyer friend Sri B. V. V. Raman of Panukonda, I had darshan of Swami Kesaviahji. Swamiji, after patiently hearing the details of my suffering said "You will have to suffer like this for another three months. Three days after three months, a black dog would go to your house and eat the food offered by you. Then by the grace of Baba you will be relieved of your suffering and you will be all right." He gave Udhi and I took leave of him in hope. Exactly on the third day after three months had passed, a black dog stood at my doors and ate the food I offered. Thereafter I was completely relieved of my ailment and was perfectly all right. But I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention here that the moment I was relieved of my trouble Swamiji was gripped of the pain and He suffered very much for three days. When I came to know of this I was overawed and my hair stood on ends, as this means Godly men suffer for those who surrender to them like Jesus Christ. From my place, I mentally prostrated before Swamiji and I saw Sri Sai Baba himself in the place of Swamiji and prayed.

HIS WORDS COME TRUE.

Mr..... "I am working as an Executive Engineer in the Corporation of

Madras. Every Thursday I attend the Puja at the Sai Nilayam and solve my problems through the valuable advice of Swamiji. I found it very difficult to secure admission for my daughter in a college. When I expressed my difficulty Swamiji said that Sri Sai Baba in His infinite mercy would help my daughter with a seat in a college. My daughter was admitted in a college. When Swamiji foresaw that she would not be successful in the Examination the same year but would get through in the following year I was very much depressed. Swamiji's words came true to the last syllable. My mind was cleared of all doubts and misgivings and I fully realised the truth of Swamiji's words."

THE WONDERFUL EFFICACY OF UDHI.

"I am Velu, working as a Motor Driver in the Tamil Nadu Construction Company. Last year my wife was in the family way. I was worried because of her very weak health and expressed my fears to Swamiji, who assured me that by the grace of Baba my wife would have a normal delivery and that there was no need for any anxiety. He gave me a packet of Udhi and said that it should be with my wife until delivery. But the innate fear in me regarding her weak state of health forced me to admit her in a nursing home at exorbitant cost. On examining her the doctors concluded that she would have to be operated upon and the child taken out. The date and time for the operation were fixed. Due to my preoccupation with her suffering I had totally forgotten to take the packet of Udhi while going to the nursing home. I rushed to my house, got the packet and placed it beneath her pillow. The appointed day of operation dawned. I was stricken with a strange fear and anxiety. I hastened to Sai Nilayam and expressed my feelings Swamiji assured me that my wife would have a normal delivery and no operation would be done

and advised me to shed my unfounded fears. With the Udhi and renewed faith infused in me I returned to the nursing home to find my wife being prepared by the nursing staff to be taken to the theatre. There was half an hour left for the doctors to arrive. Placing all my fears and worries at the feet of Sri Sai Baba, I applied Udhi on my wife's forehead, in a few minutes my wife delivered a male child. The specialist, who arrived later and everyone in the nursing home were flabbergasted. My joy knew no bounds and at that very moment I named my son as ' Sai '."

VISION OF BABA

BY SWAMI KESAVAIAHJI

It was on 1st of July 1939 Sri Swamiji had the invaluable vision of Sri Sai Baba. Sri Baba was with him for five minutes. Next day while narrating to his wife about this vision he decided to fetch a photo of Sri Sai Baba and worship it. At that time Swamiji received a photograph of Sri Sai Baba from Sri Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi. While Swamiji was wondering at the receipt of Sri Sai Baba's photo from Shirdi Sansthan, where he was little known or heard of, he received a big parcel of Udhi from Shirdi. Swamiji's joyful surprise was immeasurable.

Thus Sri Sai Baba chose Sri Swmiji as His Apostle. From then on Sri Kesevaiah came to be known and addressed as Swamiji by one and all. He raised funds from the public and built a temple for Sri Sai Baba at Penukonda. It may not be out of place to recall the words of Sri B. V. Narasimhaswamy, who was spreading the Sai cult through the length and breadth of India and who built the Sri Sai Baba temple at Mylapore, Madras. He said, " On Thursday evenings when Swamiji after finishing puja throws open the doors and gives darshan to his devotees, everyone sees the dazzling

brilliance on his face which has the power to wipe off all falsehood and pretence. Every word uttered by him then is truth and nothing but truth. With that power and force of truth he spells out the present and future of his devotees and advises the right path to adopt to ward off evil and misery and attain bliss ". True to the words of Sri B. V. Narasimhaswamy, there are numberless devotees who have been benefited by the saintly guidance of Swamiji. All the devotees have proclaimed their faith in Baba and declared they would be His devotees for ever.

RECORD OF 14 YEARS WORK.

Sri Swamiji founded the Sri Sai Baba Bhakta Samajam in the year 1959 and continues to be its President. A Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen, two secretaries and a treasurer along with an executive committee of eleven members assist Swamiji in the activities of the Samajam in propagating the Sai-cult. Sri Ramanavami, Sri Sai Baba Mahasamadhi day and Sri Guru Poornima are the three public functions organised and conducted by the Samajam every year with the sole object of spreading the message of Sri Sai Baba. One is sure to have the vision of Sri Sai Baba only if one follows the advice of Swamiji not to swerve from the path of righteousness and always and at all costs speak the truth and truth alone. Swamiji who pours divine grace on all his devotees irrespective of casts, creed, colour or sex has striven hard to put up a Mandir to enshrine Sri Sai Baba at the site opposite to " Sai Nilayam ", Shenoy Nagar. The Mandir when completed is sure to be a monument for ever, not to be forgotten for ages. Hitherto a sum of Rupees two and a half lacs have been spent and still a considerable amount is required to complete it. Let us all donate whatever we can with our full heart to complete the Mandir, which will be perennial source of

solace and comfort to one and all and enable the devotees to congregate, meditate and partake of the everlasting and imperishable peace and mind, which one cannot achieve at any price without Divine grace through Sri Sai Baba.

WHAT THE MANDIR WILL MEAN TO YOU.

This is the aim of the Mandir—to stand as a fountain of hope and peace to all the devotees who place faith in Sri Sai Baba and this chosen servant Swami Kesavaiahji and serve the cause with all their heart and soul.

Courtesy: SWADESAMITRAN, MADRAS.

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ராமாயணத்தின் சில சிறப்புகள்

—ஏ. ஜி. வேங்கடாச்சாரி—

பன்னெடுங் காலமாக நூல்த் ராமாயணத் தைப் போல வேறு எந்த கிரந்தமும் இந்த தேசமக்களை அவ்வளவு கவர்ந்ததில்லை. மலைகளும் நதிகளும் உள்ளளவும் உலக மக்களிடையே ராமாயணம் சிறப்பற்று விளங்கும் என்பது பிரம்மாவின் வாக்கு. இன்றும் பாரத நாட்டில் மட்டுமின்றி எல்லா அயல் நாடுகளிலும் ராமாயணம் அதன் சிறப்பியல்புகளுக்காகப் போற்றப்படுகிறது. இர்தோனேசியா, கம்போடியா, தாய்லாந்து, மலாசியா உட்பட எல்லா தென் கிழக்கு ஆசிய நாடுகளிலும் அதன் தொன்மையான செல்வாக்கை இன்றும் கண்டறியலாம். இர்தோனேசியாவில் சித்திர ராமாயணம் பாடபுத்தகமாக எட்டு தொகுதிகளில் வெளியாகி உயர்நிலையை அடைந்துள்ளது. இள வயதினர் மனதில் வேருன்றி குணப்பண்புகளை வளர்ப்பதற்கு அதற்கு ஈடு வேறு நூல் இல்லை என்பது அந்தத் தொகுப்பின் முகவுரையில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது. மத நம்பிக்கை இல்லாத சோவியத் யூனியனில் எல்லா மொழிகளிலும் ராமாயணத்தை வெளியிட்டிருப்பதுடன், நாட்டிய நாடகமாகவும் அது புகழ் அடைந்துள்ளது. கதாபாத்திரங்களின் குண விசேஷங்கள் சோவியத் மக்களைப் பெரிதும் ஈர்த்துள்ளன.

நம் நாட்டில் எல்லா மொழி இலக்கியங்களையும் தொன்று தொட்டு ராமாயணம் வளப்படுத்தி வந்திருப்பதைக் காணலாம். பாஸன், காளிதாஸன் முதல் இன்று வரை ராமாயணத்தைக் கொண்டு தமது படைப்புக்களைப் போஷிக்காத நூலாசிரியர்களோ கவிஞர்களோ இல்லை. ஆழ்வாராதிகளின் ராம அனுபவம் இணையற்றது. நம் நாட்டில் முஸ்லிம் ஆதிக்கம் பரவத்தொடங்கிய பிறகு, தருமத்தில் பற்றுதல் உள்ள ஹிந்துக்கள் ராமாயண மறுமலர்ச்சியின் மூலமாகத்தான் இந்தத் தேசத்தின் ஆத்மாவை கட்டிக்காதனர். இக்காலத்தில்தான் அநேகமாக எல்லா இந்திய மொழிகளிலும் ராமாயணம்

முழு வடிவமாக வெளி வந்து மக்கள் தைரியம் இழக்காமல் தொடர்ந்து செயலாற்றுவதற்கு ஊக்கம் அளித்தது என்பதை நினைவு கூர்வது சாலப்பொருத்தமாகும். அவ்வப் பொழுது நிகழ்ந்தவைகள் வந்தனவாயினும் மக்கள் மனதிலிருந்தும் வாழ்க்கை நெறியினின்றும் ராமாயணத்தை அகற்ற யாராலும் முடியவில்லை. எனவே எப்படிப் பார்த்தாலும் ராமாயணத்தை பாரத சமுதாயத்தின் ஆதார சுருதி என்று கொள்ளலாம்.

ராமாயணத்திற்குப் பலவகை மேம்பாடுகள் உண்டு. அவற்றில் அறமே திருவுருவாக நின்று வழி காட்டும் ஸ்ரீராமனது குண விசேஷங்கள் முதன்மையானவை. “ராமோ விக்ரஹவான் தர்ம:” என்பது கவி வாக்கியம். அநதக குண நலன்களின் விவரணையே ராம கதை என்பது வால்மீகி நாரதர் உரையாடலின் மூலம், எடுத்த எடுப்பிலேயே வெளிப்படுகிறது. இதிஹாஸ நாயகி யாகிய சீதை எல்லா வகைகளிலும் பர்த்தாவுக்கு ஏற்ற பதிவிரதை. “சீதையின் பெருங்கதை” (சீதாயா: சரிதம் மஹத்) என்பது ராமாயணத்துக்கு கிடைத்துள்ள மற்றொரு தனிப் பெருமை “சிறை இருந்தவள் ஏற்றம்” என்று சான்றோர் அவளது சரிதத்தை அழகாக விமர்சனம் செய்துள்ளனர். “கற்பெனும் ஒன்று யாங்கு களி நடம் புரியக கண்டேன்” என்று அவளது சிறை வாழ்க்கையை அனுமான் வாயிலாகப் போற்றிப் புகழ்கின்றன கம்பன்.

அனுமனது பாத்திரமும் லட்சுமணனது கைங்கரியமும் விபீஷணனது உயர்நெறிப் பற்றுதலும் ராம கதைக்கு மகுடங்களாக அமைந்துள்ளவை. இந்த இதிஹாஸத்துக்கு உள்ள மற்றொரு தனிச் சிறப்பு விண்ணும், மண்ணும், வானோரும் வையகத்தாரும், மிருகங்களும் பட்சிகளும், அரக்கரிடையே இரக்கம் உள்ளவர்களும் ஒரு சேர அறத்தின் உயர்வுக்கு உழைத்திருப்பதுதான். தருமத்

துக்கு அத்துணை ஈர்ப்புச் சக்தி உண்டு என்பதைக் காண்கிறோம்.

ராமாயணத்துக்கு உள்ள மற்றொரு தனிப் பெருமை “சரணாகதி சாஸ்திரம்” என்று அது போற்றப்படுவதாகும். ஆண்டவனை அடைக்கலம் புகுந்தால், எல்லா நிலைகளிலும் அவன் ரட்சிப்பான் என்ற பெருமையை தொடக்கத்திலிருந்தே இதிலாஸம் புலப்படுத்துகிறது. அரக்கர்களின் கொடுமையிலிருந்து விடுபட வாழோர் ஸ்ரீமந் நாராயணனைச் சரணடைகின்றனர். அதன் நேரடி விளைவே ராமாவதாரம். தண்டகாரணயத்தில் ரிஷிகள் ராமனை அணுகி அபயம் கோருகின்றனர். நிரபராதிகளான தங்களை அரக்கர்கள் கொன்று குவிப்பதாகவும். தம்மை ரஷிக்க வேண்டும் என்றும் கோருகிறார்கள். அன்று முதல் இப்பணி தொடர்கிறது. அன்றாடம் வில்லையும் அம்புறத் தூளியையும் தரும் சீதை ஒரு நாள் ஒரு தார்மிகப் பிரச்சனையை எழுப்புகிறாள். தவசிகளாக வந்தவர்களுக்கு ஆயுதம் எதற்கு என்று விழைகிறாள். அதனால் வம்புச் சண்டை வரக் கூடும்ல்லவா என்று கேட்கிறாள். அரக்கர்களால் தமக்குத் தொந்தரவு இல்லையே என்றும் வினவுகிறாள். எப்பொழுது ராமன் கொடுத்த வாக்கை காப்பாற்றியாக வேண்டும், சரணம் அடைந்தவர்களைக் காப்பாற்றியே தீரவேண்டும், அதுவே தனது தருமம் என்று விடை பகர்கின்றாள். “சீதே, உன்னை விட்டாலும் விடுவேன்; லட்சுமணனையும் புறக்கணிக்கத் தயங்கேன். ஆனால் சொன்ன சொல்லை மீற மாட்டேன்” என்று பதிலளித்து சரணாகதி தருமத்தின் தன்மையை விளக்குகின்றாள் ராமன். அதற்குப் பிறகு சீதையும் அண்டினோர்க்கு அபயமளிக்கும் தருமத்தை இடையறாது கடைப்பிடிக்கலானார் என்பதைக் கதை நெடுகக் காண்கிறோம்.

காகாகரன் சீதையிடம் அபசாரப்பட்டவன், மரண தண்டனைக்கு உரியவன். பிரம்மாஸ்திரம் துரத்தவே மூவுலகிலும் காப்பாற்றுவாரின்றி ராமன் திருவடிகளிலேயே வந்து விழுகிறான். கோணல் மாணலாக விழுந்த காக்கையை நேராகத் திருப்பி விட்டு அவனுக்கு உயிர்ப்பிச்சை கிடைப்பதற்கு சீதை துணை புரிந்தாள், ராமனும் கருணை புரிந்தான்

என்பதைக் காண்கிறோம். அபயமளிப்பதில் கணவனுக்குத் தான் சளைத்தவன் அல்ல என்பதை முதல் தடவையாக இங்கு மெய்ப்பிக்கின்றாள் பிராட்டி. அவள் தாயுள்ளம் படைத்தவள். எனவே குற்றம் இழைத்தோர் திருந்தி மன்னிப்புக் கேட்டால் அதை அளித்துத்தானாக வேண்டும் என்பது அவளது நியதி. சுந்தர காண்டத்தில் ராவணன் தகாத வார்த்தைகளைச் சொல்லி அவனை ஈர்க்க முயன்ற போது இரண்டு விஷயங்களை எடுத்துச் சொல்கிறாள். “உங்கள் ஊரில் சான்றோர் இல்லையா? அல்லது அவர்கள் சொல்வதைத்தான் கேட்பதில்லையா? ஆகையால்தான் புத்தியும் ஒழுக்கமும் நிலைகுலைந்துள்ளனவோ!” என்று கேட்கிறாள். “ராமனிடம் என்னை ஒப்படைத்துவிட்டு அவன் தாளடி பற்று. அவன் சரணாகத வத்ஸனம் அவனுடன் நட்புறவு கொள்” என்று புத்தி கூறுகிறாள். அது விழலுக்கு இறைத்த நீராகிறது.

இலங்கையில் சான்றோர் உண்டு, அவர்கள் சொல்வதைத்தான் ராவணன் கேட்பதில்லை என்பதை விபீஷணனது புறக்கணிப்பு மெய்ப்பிக்கிறது. அவன் எவ்வளவோ நல்ல புத்தி சொல்லியும் ராவணன் கேட்கவில்லை. அவனைத் துச்சமாக எடுத்தெறிந்து சாடினான். பொருமைக்காரன் என்று இநதிரஜித் வசை மொழிந்தான். இந்த நிலையில் மறத்தை விடுத்து அறத்திடம் அடைக்கலம் புகுவதே உயர்ந்த தருமம் என்பதை உணர்ந்து மனைவி மக்களை விட்டு, நான்கு தோழர்களுடன் சென்று ராமனிடம் சரண புகுகின்றாள் விபீஷணன். அவனது சரணாகதியை ஏற்றுக் கொள்வது முறையாகாது என்று வாதிக்கிறான சுக்கிரீவன். அண்ணனுக்கு எதிரிடையாக மாறியவனை நம்பலாமா என்று கேட்கிறான். இறுதியாக ராமன், சரணாகதி தரும லட்சணத்தைக் கூறி, எல்லா உயிர்களுக்கும் அபயம் அளிப்பது தன் விரதம் என்று பதிலளித்து, விபீஷணனை அரவணத்துக் கொண்டு, சரணாகதியின் உயர்நிலையைப் புலப்படுத்துகின்ற காட்சி ராமாயணத்திலேயே மிகச் சிறந்த ஒன்று.

ராவணன் வந்து போன பிறகு சுந்தர காண்டத்தில் அரக்கிகள் சீதையைப் பல

வாராக மிரட்டுகிறார்கள். அவள் மனமுடைந்து போகிறாள். அப்பொழுது அவளது தாயுள்ளத்தை அறிந்த திமிஜடை, ராட்சஸிகளை வரப்போகும் மகத்தான பயத்திலிருந்து காப்பாற்றக் கூடியவன் சீதை ஒருவனே என்றும் அவனைச் சரணடைபுமாரும் பணிகின்றாள். அவர்கள் சரண் அடைந்ததாகக் கதையில்லை. ஆனால் ராவண வதம் ஆரம்பிக்கு நெற்றிச் செய்தியை கூற சீதையிடம் அனுமன் வருகின்றான். போர் முடிந்ததுவிட்டதையும் அறியாமல் ராட்சஸிகள் அவளை மிரட்டிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள் எந்த சுபச் செய்திக் கூறக் சீதை காததிருக்கின்றாளோ அதை அனுமன் கூறியும் அவள் சிறிது நேரம் வாளா விருக்கின்றாள். காரணம் கேட்கிறான் அனுமன். “உனக்குக் கொடுக்க என்னிடம் பரிசு இல்லையே என்று வருந்துகிறேன்” எனபது சீதையின் பதில். “நீ பரிசு தர முடியும் கொடுமை புரிந்த இந்த ராட்சஸிகளை ஒரு

கை பார்க்க அனுமதியுங்கள்” என்று கேட்கிறான் அனுமன். “எய்தவன் இருக்க அம்பை நோவதேன்?” என்று பதிலளிக்கிறாள் சீதை. அவர்கள் கடமையைச் செய்தனர் என்பதை நினைவூட்டி, உயர்ந்தவர்களின் லட்சணம் கருணையுடன் நடந்து கொள்வதுதான் என்று ஒரு கதையின் உதவியுடன் விவரிக்கின்றாள். சரணாகதி செய்யாமலி நந்தும் தானே உவந்து காப்பாற்றிய இப்பெருமையால் ராமனை விட இவ்வகையில் சீதை உயர்ந்தவளாகிறாள் என்பதைக் காண்கிறோம்.

ராமாயணம் புலப்படுத்தும் அறநெறி, குணநலன்களின் உயர்வு, சரணாகதி தர்மம் ஆகியவை சாசுவதமானவை. மனிதனது மனதில் நாம் இருக்கும்வரை அவை மதிப்பிற்குரிய மாட்டா என்பதை உணர்ந்து செம்மைப்படுவதுதான் நம் போன்றோருக்கு உள்ள ஒரே வழி.

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ஆஜாநுலம்பித் புஜெளகநகாவதாநெள மங்கித் தலங்கிதரெள கமலாயதாசெள,
விச்வம்பரெள, த்விஜுவரெள புகதர்மபலெள வந்தி ஜகத்ப்ரியகரெள கருணாவ தாரெள ||

(தான்தோப் தடக்கையதம், தூயபொன் மேனியம், கமலக்கண்ணினரும், திப் பெயரிசை பரப்பியவரும், ஊழ் அறம் பாலிப் பவரும், பக்திவெள்ளம் பாய்ச்சி உலகைப் பரத்தவரும், மக்கள் நெஞ்சினில் உறை பவரும், கருணை விடிவெடுத்த வந்தவரும் துணைபிரியாதவரும், அந்தண்மையமான கௌராங்க நித்யானந்தர்களை வணங்குகின்றேன்).

நவதீபம் அல்லது நதியா என்ற ஊர் வங்காளத்தில் உள்ளது. அறிவுலகம் ஒழுக்கத்திலும் சிறந்த பெரியோர் வாழ்ந்த இடமது. சகாப்தம் 1407 (கி பி 1485)-பால்துன மாதம்; அன்று பௌர்ணமி; சந்திர கிரஹணம். வேப்பமரத்தின்கீழ் ஒரு கீற்றுக் கொட்டகை; ஜகநாத மித்ரரின் வீடு அது. அவருடைய மனைவி சசீதேவி தன் பத்தாவது மகவாக ஓர் ஆண்குழந்தையைப் பெற்றெடுத்தாள். குழந்தைக்கு விசுவம்பரன் என்று தந்தை பெயர் வைத்தார். தாய் அவனைச் செல்வமாக 'நிமாயி' (வேம்பு) என்று அழைத்தாள். திவ்பகாந்தயுடன் துலங்கியதால் அவனை எல்லோரும் 'கௌரஹரி'; 'கௌராங்க'; 'கோரா' என்றெல்லாம் பெயர்ரிட்டனர்.

அவர் மற்ற குழந்தைகளைப் போல் இல்லை. அவதாரபுருஷரென்றே எல்லோரும் நினைத்தனர். சிறு வயதில் ஓயாமல் அழுவாராம். தற்செயலாக வீட்டுக்கு வந்த ஒரு மாது, குழந்தை வீடுவதைப் பார்த்து ஹரி நாமத்தைச் சொல்லிக் கை தட்டினாளாம். சட்டென நிமாயியின் அழுகை நின்றதாம்.

நிமாயியிக்கு ஓர் அண்ணன் உண்டு; அவன் பெயர் விசுவரூபன். உலகைத் துறந்து சந்நியாசியாகப் போய்விட்டான். அந்த வேதனையில் ஜகநாத மித்ரர் ஒடுங்கிப்போய் இறந்து விட்டார். சசீதேவிக்கு நிமாயி ஒருவனே

இருந்தான். கங்காதர பண்டிதரின் 'டோல்' (பாடசாலை) இல் மகனைச் சேர்த்தாள் அவன் முதன்மைபாக நின்றான். தருக்க சாஸ்திரத்தில் திறமை பூண்டான். ஒரு சமயம் நவதீபத்திற்குக் தேவ பண்டிதர் வாதப்போர் தொகை விறியம் செய்தார். அவரை வெல்வதே கடனம். ஆனால் நிமாயி பண்டிதர் ஒரு செய்யுள் பாடி அதன் கருத்தை விளக்கும்படி கேட்டார். அந்த காஷ்மீர் வித்வான் அதற்குப் பொருள் கூறத் தெரியால் விழித்துத் தம் தோல்வியை ஒப்புக்கொண்டார். நவதீபத்தின் நல்ல பெயரைக் காப்பாற்றினார் நிமாயி.

நிமாயி பண்டிதருக்குத் திருமணமாகியது. அவருடைய இல்லாளின் பெயர் லக்ஷ்மி. அவர் தனியாகவே ஒரு பாடசாலையை ஆரம்பித்தப் பிள்ளைகளுக்குப் பாடம் சொல்லி வந்தார். சாஸ்திரங்களை ஆராய்வதனால் அறிவு வளரும்; அறிவினால் வரும் பயன் தெய்வபக்தி. வரவர நிமாயியின் மனம் கடவுள்பால் ஒன்றியது. தருக்கம், இலக்கணம் இவற்றில் வெறுப்பு மூண்டது.

நிமாயியுடன் படித்தவன் ரகுநாதன் நியாய சாஸ்திரத்தில் நிபுணன். 'தீதிதி' என்ற பெரிய நூலை எழுதிப் புகழ் எய்தியவன். நிமாயி பண்டிதரும் இத்துறைபற்றி ஒரு நூல் யாத்திருந்தார். அதை நண்பனுக்குப் படித்துக் காட்டினார். ரகுநாதனுடைய முகம் வாடிவிட்டது: தான் எழுதிய நூல் அவருடையதற் கெதிரே நிற்காதெனக் கண்டான். அவன் வேதனையை உணர்ந்த நிமாயி தம் நூலை பொங்கியோடும் கங்கையில் எறிந்துவிட்டார். அன்றே நிமாயி சாஸ்திரத்திற்கு ஒரு முழுக்குப் போட்டார்.

ஒரு சமயம் கிழக்கு வங்காளத்திலுள்ள ஸ்ரீஹட்டம் (சில்ஹட்) என்ற தம் சொந்த ஊரைப் பார்த்துவிட்டு வரச் சென்றிருந்தார்

நிமாயி. திரும்பியபொழுது துயர்மிகு செய்தி அவருக்குக் காத்திருந்தது. அவருடைய மனைவி லக்ஷ்மி பாம்பு கடித்து இறந்து போனாள். நிமாயி சில மாதங்கள் இத்துயரை மறக்கமுடியாமல் தவித்தார் ஈசுவரபுரி என்ற பெரியார் நவத்வீபம் வந்திருந்தார். அவரை உண்டி நிமாயி பக்தி சம்பந்தமான பல விஷயங்களை அறிந்து கொண்டார். நிமாயியின் தாய் ஸநாதந மிச்சர் என்பாரின் மகள் விஷ்ணுப்ரியாவை தன் மகனுக்கு இரண்டாம் தாரமாக நிச்சயித்து விட்டாள். நிமாயி இதனை எிரும்பவில்லை. கடைசியில் தாமே சென்று அவளை மணந்து கொண்டார்.

நிமாயி பண்டிதருக்கு சம்சார வாழ்க்கை பிடிக்கவில்லை. பிள்ளைகளுக்கும் பாடம் கற்றுத் தருவதில் அவருக்கு வெறுப்பு மூண்டது. எப்போதும் ஹரியின் சித்தனையே பள்ளிக் கூடத்தை மூடிவிட்டார். பிள்ளைகள் கதறினர் - 'எதற்கு படிப்பு எங்களுக்கு? நாம ஸங்கீர்த்தனம் செய்யும் வழியைக் கற்றுத் தாரும், உபர்ந்து போவோம்' கையில் தாளம் போட்டுத் தம்மை அண்டிய ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் கிருஷ்ண ஸ்மரணையான திவ்யநாமங்களைப் பாடவும்; அதற்கேற்ப ஆடவும் கற்றுத் தந்து தாமும் மெய்மறந்து போவார்: நவத்வீபத்தில் பக்திவெள்ளம் பெருகி ஓடியது.

ஞானதர்மே யோசதர்மே

நஹே க்ருஷ்ண வச |

கிருஷ்ண வச ஹேது

ஏக ப்ரேம பக்திரஸ ||

(ஞான யோக சாதனைகளால் கண்ணனைக் கவரமுடியாது; அதற்கு வழி பக்திச்சுவை ஒன்றுதான்.)

அன்று தொட்டு நிமாயி இப் புதிய தர்மத்தைப் பிரசாரம் செய்யத் தொடங்கினார்—

ஏவம் வ்ரத ஸ்வப்ரியநாம பிர்தபா ஜாதாநு
ராகோ த்ருத சித்த உச்சை |

ஹஸத்யதோ ரோதிதி ரௌதி காயதி உந்
மாதவத் ந்ருத்யதி லோகவாஹய: ||

திடீரென ஒருநாள் வீட்டைத் துறந்த ஒரு இளைஞர் நவத்வீபத்தில் தோன்றினார். அவர்

தான் நித்யாநந்தர் (நிதாயி). நம் நிமாயியின் ஆத்ம நண்பரானார். இருவரும் இணையிரியாது ஸ்ரீ வாஸர் வீட்டில் நடக்கும் ஸங்கீர்த்தன கோஷ்டியில் கலந்து கொள்வார்கள். 'கௌர நிதாயி தாராது பாஇ' (கௌரனும் நிதாயும் அண்ணன் தம்பிகள்).

நிதாயி நிமாயியுடன் கிருஷ்ண பக்தியில் மனம், மெய், மொழி இம் மூன்றுமாக ஈடுபட்டவர்கள் நால்வராவர்: ஆத்வைத பிரபு, யவன ஹரிதாஸர், கதாதரர், ஸ்ரீவாஸர்.

அந்தக் காலத்தில் வங்கநாடு பட்டாண்துருக்க அரசன் ஹுஸேன் ஷா வசத்தில் இருந்தது. மக்கள் முஸ்லீம் பழக்க வழக்கங்களில் தோய்ந்து ஸ்வதர்மத்தைக் கைவிட்டிருந்தனர். நிமாயியின் பக்திப் பிரசாரத்திற்குத் தடை ஏற்பட்டது வேற்றுச் சமயத் தவர் அவரது பக்தி வெள்ளத்தைத் தடுக்க முடியாமல் தோல்வியுற்றனர். ஜகாயி மதாயி என்ற வெறிபர்களின் கொடுமைக்கு நிதாயி ஆளாகி, அவர்களை நல்வழிக்குத் திருப்ப முயற்சியெடுத்தான் இந்த பக்தி மாரகத்தின் சிறப்புத்தான் என்னே!

ஏம்நி ஹரிர் அஹேது கருணா

ப்ரேமேர் ஏம்நி ஜாது

கய்லா ஹ்ருதய கலி ஹீரா ஹய்

தஸ்கர ஹய், ஸாது

(ஹரிநாமத்துக்குள்ள மாயா சக்திதான் என்னே! கரித்துண்டும் வயிரமாகும்; கயவர்களும் கண்ணியராவார்)

ஒரு சமயம் நாமஸங்கீர்த்தனம் மும்முரமாக நடந்து கொண்டிருந்தது ஸ்ரீவாஸர் வீட்டில் அப்போது வேலைக்காரி ஸ்ரீவாஸரை அழைத்து அவருடைய குழந்தை இறந்து போய்விட்டதை ரகசியமாக அறிவித்தாள். யாரும் அழக்கூடாதெனக் கூறிவிட்டு அவர்கீர்த்தனை கோஷ்டியில் கலந்துகொண்டார்; துக்கத்தையே மறந்தார். நிமாயியிக்கு இது எப்படியோ தெரிந்து விட்டது. ஏன் இதை மறைக்கவேண்டுமென கேட்டபோது அவர், புத்திர சோகத்தைச் சகித்தாலும் சகிப்பேன்; ஆனால் தங்கள் திருவிழிகளிலிருந்து நீர் பெருகுவதை எங்ஙனம் சகிப்பேன்? என்று ராம.

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Dealers in : Hardware & Tools

Mfrs. of: All Sort of Springs

சிமாயி அடிக்கடித் தம்மை ராதையாக பாவித்துக் கொண்டு கண்ணனைக் காண வங்குவார்; விரக கீதங்களைப் பாடுவார். நிமாயிக்கு ஸம்ஸாரம் கசத்துவிட்டது. பூணமாகக் கிருஷ்ண பகவானிடம் தம்மை அர்ப்பணம் செய்துகொள்ளத் துறவறத்தை நோக்கி அவர் எண்ணம் விரைந்தது. அவர் மனைவி இதுகேட்டு ஓடி வந்தாள். அவளைத் தேற்றி அவர், பிரியமுன் பள்ளியறையில் அவளுடன் இருந்து பகதியின் மேன்மையைப் புகட்டினார். நள்ளிரவு; துயிலும் தம் மனைவியைப் பிரிந்து நிமாயி என்ற கிருஷ்ண சைதன்யர் (கண்ணன் மீது மனமுடையவர்) நதிக்கரைக்குச் சென்றார். குளிர் நடுக்கும் கங்குல். அக்கரைக்குச் செல்லத் துறையில் படகைக் காணவில்லை. கங்கையின் சீதப் புனலில் நீந்திச் சென்றார். அக்கரையில்தான் கேசவபாரதி என்பவரின் ஆசிரமம். அவரைச் சைதன்யர் ஸாஷ்டாங்கமாக வணங்கிச் சந்திரபிம்பம் போன்ற முகத்திற்கு அழகு செய்த அந்தச் சிகையை மழித்தார். பூந்துகில் அணிய வேண்டிய அந்தப் பொன்மேனியில் காணியாடை துலங்கியது. அந்தக் கோலத்தில் அவரைப் பார்த்து நவத்வீபமே கதறியது. சைதன்யருக்கு ஒரு சமயம் யாரோ கனவில் உபதேசித்த மந்த்ரமும், பாரதி புகட்டிய மந்த்ரமும் ஒன்றாகவே இருந்தன.

சைதன்யப் பிரபு முறையாகத் தீர்த்த யாத்திரை செய்யப் புறப்பட்டார். நீலாசலம் என்ற ஜகந்நாதக்ஷேத்திரத்தில் தங்கினார். நிதாயியைத் திருமணம் செய்துகொள்ளத் தூண்டி அவரை நவத்வீபத்திலேயே நிறுத்தி விட்டார். கிருஷ்ணதேவராயரின் சமகாலத்தவனான கலிங்க அரசன் பிரதாப ருத்திர கஜபதி, பரம வைஷ்ணவன் சைதன்யர் நீலாசலத்தில் இருந்த சமயம் நாட்டில் பெரும் குழப்பம். பட்டாணியர் ஒரு புறம், விஜயநகரத்து அரசன் ஒரு புறம் தாக்கக் கலிங்கம் மோசமான நிலையில் இருந்தது. பகவானுடைய பிரதிமையை மறைத்து வைக்க வேண்டியதாயிற்று. தென்னகம் நோக்கிச் சென்றார் சைதன்யர். ராமேசுவரம், ஸ்ரீரங்கம், காஞ்சி, பக்ஷிதீர்த்தம், திருப்பதி, அஹோபிலம், ஆகிய திவ்ய

ஸ்தலங்களில் தங்கித் தம்முடைய அசிந்தய பேதாபேத வாதத்தை நிலைநாட்டினார். ஸ்ரீரங்கத்தில் ஓர் தென்னாட்டு வைணவர் கீதையைப் பாராயணம் செய்வதைப் பார்த்துச் சைதன்யர் கீதை குறித்து அவரது கருத்தை அறிய விரும்பினார். அந்த வைணவர், தமக்குக் கீதைக்குரிய பொருள் தெரியாதென்றும் ஆனால் தம் முன் ரதத்தில் கிருஷ்ணனும் அர்ஜுனனும் இருப்பது தெரிகிறதென்றார். 'ஆகா, இதுதானே வேண்டும். நீர்தான் கீதையைப் உண்மையாகப் புரிந்துகொண்டவர்' என அவரைப் புகழ்ந்தார். பில்வமங்களர் பாடிய கிருஷ்ணகர்ணம்ருதத்தின் பாடல்களை ஒலைச்சுவடியிலிருந்து பிரதி செய்துகொண்டு அதை வடநாட்டில் பரவச் செய்தார்.

ஹுசேன ஷாவிடம் அமைச்சர்களாக இருந்த ரூப ஸநாதன என்ற சகோதரர்கள் இருவரும் செலவம் கொழிக்கும் அரசியல் பதவியை துச்சமென உதறிவிட்டு, சைதன்யரின் பரம சீடர்களாக விளங்கினர். பிருந்தாவனத்தில் சில நாட்கள் இருந்ததும் சைதன்யர் ஜகந்நாதக்ஷேத்திரத்திற்குத் திரும்பினார். கிருஷ்ண விரகம் அவருக்கு முற்றிவிட்டது. நீலநிறமாக எது தோன்றினாலும், கண்ணென அதனைத் தழுவிக்கொள்ள ஓடுவார். பகவானுடன் பழகிய விசேஷத்தால் ரூபகோஸ்வாயி சைதன்ய மதத்தை விளக்கும் பல நூல்களை இயற்றினார். உஜ்வல நீலமணி, லலிதமாதவம் விதக்த மாதவம் அவற்றுள் சில

ஒரு சமயம் புரி கடற்கரையில் உலாவும் போது சைதன்யர் நீலக்கடலினைக் கண்ணனின் நீலமேனியென மருண்டு அதனுள் மூழ்கிவிட ஓடினார். செம்படவன் அவரைக் கரையிலே எடுத்துப் போட்டான்.

நாளாக நாளாக இந்த கிருஷ்ணப்பிரேமை அவருக்கு அதிகரித்து வந்தது. ஒருநாள் இரவு அவர் 'கம்பீரா' என்ற தம் விடுதியில் அரற்றுவது கேட்டது. கதவில் மோதிக் கொண்டதால் சைதன்யரின் முகமெல்லாம் ரத்தம் வடிந்தது. கண்ணனைக் காண அவர் திடுமென வெளியே கிளம்பினார். வாசல் முகப்பில் தலை மோதியது. சகம் 1455 (கி.பி. 1532) நீலாசலத்தில் அவர் பகவானுடன் ஒன்றி நித்திய புருஷராகிவிட்டார்.

ஸ்ரீ கருஷ்ண சைதன்ய ப்ருதிவீதே அவதரி
அஷ்ட சல்லீச் வத்ஸர் ப்ரகட விஹரி |
சௌத்த சதஸாத் சாகே ஜந்மேர் ப்ரமாண்
சௌத்த சத பஞ்சாந்நே ஹஇலா அந்தர்
தான ||

சிக்ஷாஷ்டகம்

சைதன்யர் ஸம்ஸ்க்ருதத்தில் எட்டு பாடல்
களை இயற்றியதாகத் தெரிகிறது. ரூப
கோஸ்வாமி கிருஷ்ணபரமாத்வாவின் விஷய
மாகப் பல துறைகளில் வெவ்வேறு கவிஞர்
புனைந்திருக்கும் அரிய பாடல்களைத் தொகுத்
துள்ள 'ஸ்ரீபத்யாவளி' என்ற நூலில் மஹா
பிரபுவின் இந்த எட்டு செய்யுட்களைக்
காணலாம்:

1

சேதோ தர்ப்பண மார்ஜநம் பவ மஹாதா
வாக்நி நிர்வாபணம்
ச்ரேய: கைரவ சந்த்ரிகா விதரணம் வித்யா
வதூ ஜீவநம் |
ஆநந்தாம்புதி வர்தநம் ப்ரதிபதம் பூர்ணம்
ருதாஸ்வாதநம்
ஸர்வாத்ம ஸ்நபநம் பரம் விஜயதே
ஸ்ரீகிருஷ்ண ஸங்கீர்த்தநம் ||

கண்ணனின் திருப்புகழ் நமது மனக் கண்ணாடி
யில் படிந்த மாசினைத் துலக்க வல்லது; சம்
சார மென்னும் பெருங்காட்டுத் தீயை அவிக்
கக்கூடியது; அல்லிமலரைப் பூக்கச்செய்யும்
தண்ணிலவைப் போல் நலமதைத் தருவது;
கல்வியெனும் மணுட்டியைத் தரவல்லது; இன்
பமெனும் கடலினைப் பெருகச் செய்வது; ஒவ்
வொரு சொல்லும் அமுதின் முழுச்சுவையை
ஊட்ட வல்லது; ஆத்மாவையே நீராட்டிக்
குளிரச் செய்ய வல்லது—இதற்கு வெற்றி.

2

நாம்நாமகாரி பஹுதா நிஜ ஸர்வசக்தி:
தத்ரார்ப்பிதா நியமித: ஸ்மரணே ந கால: |
ஏதாத்ருசீ தவ க்ருபா பகவந் மமாரி
துர்தைவம் நத்ருசம் இஹ அஜநி ந
அநுராக: ||

இறைவன் தம் திருப்பெயர்களை பலவாக
வெளியிட்டுள்ளார் (கோவிந்த-முகுந்த-ஹரி,

முராரி என்றெல்லாம்); தம் சக்தி யனைத்தை
யும் அந்நாமங்களுக்கு அளித்துள்ளார்.
அவற்றை உச்சரிக்கக் காலம் நியமம் ஏது
மில்லை. இவ்வளவு கருணை கூர்ந்திருக்கையில்
என்னே துர்பாக்கியம், எனக்கு இதில்
பற்றுதலே வரவில்லை?

3

த்ருணாதபி ஸுநிசேந தரோரிவ ஸஹிஷ்ணுநா
அமாரிநா மாநதேந கீர்த்தநீய: ஸதா ஹரி: ||

புல்லைக்காட்டிலும் தாழ்மை உற்று இரு;
மரத்தைப்போல் பொறுமையாக இரு;
உன்னை ஒரு பொருட்டாக எண்ணிக் கொள்
ளாதே (கர்வம் கொள்ளாதே); பிறரை
மதித்திரு; ஹரி எப்பொழுதும் புகழப்பட
வேண்டியவன்.

4

ந தனம் ஜநம் ந ஸுந்தரீம்
கவிதாம் வா ஜகதீச காமயே |
மம ஜந்மநி ஜந்மநீச்வரே
பவதாத் பக்தி: அஹதுகீ த்வயி ||

செல்வத்தையோ, உற்றாரையோ, அழகு
மாதரையோ, நற்கவிதையையோ நான்
விரும்பவில்லை, ஏ உலக நாதனே! என்
னுடைய பிறவிதோறும் இறைவனான உன்
பால் நீங்காத பக்தி ஒன்றையே எனக்கு
அருள்வாய்.

5

அயி நந்ததநுஜ கிங்கரம் பதிதம் மாம்
விஷமே பவாம்புதௌ |
கருபயா தவ பாதபங்கஜஸ்தித தூலிஸத்ருசம்
விசிரதய ||

நந்தகோபன மதலையே, கோர பவக்கடலில்
(சம்சாரம்) முக்கிய உன் அடிமையான
எனனைக் கரையேற்றி, உன் திருவடித்
தாமரையின் ஒரு பொடித்துளியாக நினைத்து
ஏற்றுக்கொள்வாய்.

6

நயநம் கலத் அச்ருதாரயா வதநம் கத்கத்
ருத்தயா கிரா |
புலகை : நிசிதம் வபு : கதா தவ நாமக்ர
ஹணே பவிஷ்யதி ||

உனது திருப்பெயரைச் சொல்லும்போது
கண்ணீர் பெருகவும், உணர்ச்சியால் வாய்
மொழிக் குழறவும், உவகையால் உடல்
சிலிர்க்கவும் நேரும் அந்நாள் என்று வருமோ?

7

யுகாயிதம் நிமேவேண சக்ஷுஷா ப்ராவ்ரு
ஷாயிதம் :
சூர்யாயிதம் ஜகத் ஸர்வம் கோவிந்த
விஶ்வேண மே :

(ராதையின் கூற்றாக) கண்ணனை விட்டுப்
பிரிந்தால் எனக்கு ஒரு கணம் ஊழிபோல்
நீள்கிறது; என்னுடைய கண்களில் நீர் மழை
யென இறங்குகிறது; இவ்வலகமே வெறிச்

சென்றாகிவிடுகிறது.

8

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அதர்சநாத் மர்மஹதாம் கரோது வா |
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மிதித்தாலும், எனது கண்ணில் படாமல்
நழுவிச் சென்று என் மனம் நோவச்
செய்தாலும், வேற்று மனையில் கள்ளமாயன்
விளையாட்டைப் புரிந்தாலும் அவனை என்
நாயகன், என் உயிர் அனையன், வேறு
எவனும் அல்லன்.

அபிராமி காட்டன் மில்ஸ்

(பி) லிமிடெட்

சூலூர்பேட்டை

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தந்தி : அபிராமி

தொலைபேசி : 34.

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சென்னை வாசிகளைத் தேடிவரும் சிரிடி

— தம்பி சீனிவாசன் —

ஸ்ரீராம நவமி சிறப்பாக கொண்டாடப் பெறுகிறது; ஆடி மாதம் குரு பூர்ணிமை அழகாகக் கொண்டாடப் பெறுகிறது. ஐப்பசியில் ஸ்ரீ சாயிபாபாவின் திருநாடகத் தளால போற்றப்படுகிறது இங்கே. இத்தேச சிறப்பு நாட்கள் தவிர வியாழக்கிழமை தோறும் ஆயிரக் கணக்கான மெய்யன்பர்கள் கூடித் தொழும் இடம், தொழுது பயன்பெறும் இடம். எல்லாம் நிகழ்வது சென்னை ஷெனாட நகரில் அடக்கமாகத் தோற்றமளிக்கும் 'சாயி நிலையம்' என்ற இல்லத்திலுள்ளே.

தெய்வீக சூழல் இங்கே இருபத்தைந்து ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பு சாயி பாபாவின் தொண்டரும், தரிசனம் கண்டவருமான ஸ்ரீ கேசவய்யா சென்னைக்குக் குடி வந்த போதே தொடங்கியது. தெய்வீகம் இங்கே ஆண்டு தோறும் அதிகரித்து வருகிறது—அன்பர்களின் ஆர்வத்திலும் எண்ணிக்கையிலும்.

ஆந்திர தேசத்தில் சப் ரிஜிஸ்திரார் அலுவல் அதிகாரியாக இருந்த போதே முப்பத்தைந்து ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் தெய்வ தரிசனம் கண்ட கிருகஸ்தர் கேசவய்யாஜி. வியாழன் தோறும் இவர்கள் நீண்ட நேரம் பூசை புரிந்த பின் காத்திருக்கும் மெய்யன்பர்களை ஒவ்வொருவராக அழைத்து, அருள் பிரசாதம் வழங்கி, ஆசி கூறி, இதமாக நல்லுரை ஆற்றி, தெய்வ வாக்காக எதிர்காலமும் உணர்ந்து உரைப்பது அங்கே அடிக்கடி செல்லும் பகதர்களின் அனுபவம். அவர்களது அனுக்கிரக வாக்கால் பயன் அடைந்த அன்பர்கள் பல ஆயிரம். நூற்றுக் கணக்கிலும் ஆயிரக் கணக்கிலும் மக்கள் கூடி இருந்தும் ஆரவாரம் இன்றி, அமைதி பொலிய அவர்கள் மோனத்தவம் இயற்றுவது போல நடந்து கொள்வது ஓர் அரிய காட்சி.

ஸ்ரீ சாயிபாபாவின் அருள் பெற்ற சில ஞானியருள் ஒருவரான ஸ்ரீ கேசவய்யா சுவாமி ஆந்திர தேசத்தில் பல காலமும், தற்போது தமிழ்நாட்டிலும் பல அன்பர்களின் வாழ்க்கைக்கு வழி காட்டியாகவும், குருநாதராகவும் விளங்குகிறார். எத்தனையோ உயர் அதிகாரிகள் முதல் எளிய ஊழியர்கள் வரை, வெளி

நாடுகளில் சிறப்பாக திகழ்பவர்கள் முதல் உள்நூலில் அடக்கமாக இருப்போர் வரை, நோய்தீர்க்கும் நிபுணர்கள் முதல் நோயால் பாடும அபலைகள் வரை—பலரும் இவர் மனுவைய சீடர்கள்.

கந்தந்த தெலுங்கிலும், சரளமான ஆங்கிலத்திலும் சுவாமிகள் நிகழ்த்தும் உரைகள் எளிய நடையில் உயர்ந்த கருத்துக்களைக் கொண்டிருக்கும். உறுப்பை ஒதுக்கி அன்பு காட்ட அடியவர்களைப் பழக்குகிறார் இவர். அடக்கத்துடன் உயர்ந்த தர்மங்களை நடத்தி ஸ்வகக் அடியவர்களுக்கு அன்புக்கட்டளை இடுகின்றார். தூய வாழ்வே தெய்வீக வாழ்வ என்ற கருத்தினைப் பரப்பி வருகிறார்.

ஆந்திரத்திலும் தமிழ் நாட்டிலும் கர்நாடகத்திலும் பல ஆயிரம் அன்பர்களைக் கொண்டுள்ளது சாயி நிலையம். இந்த நிலையத் தொண்டர்கள் இப்போது 'ஸ்ரீ சாயி பாபா பக்த சமாஜம்' என்ற ஓர் அமைப்பினை எடுத்து பல பெரும் பணிகளைத் தொடங்கியுள்ளனர்.

சாயி நிலையத்துக்கு எதிரே, சென்னை மாநகராட்சிக்குச் சொந்தமான பெரு நிலத்தை நீண்டகால குத்தகைக்கு எடுத்து 'சாயி மந்திர்' என்ற மண்டபம் எழுந்துள்ளது. மூன்று லட்ச ரூபாய் மதிப்புள்ள இந்த மண்டபப் பணி நிறைவுறும் நிலையில் உள்ளது. ஒரே சமயத்தில் மூவாயிரம் பேர் அமரக் கூடிய பெரிய மண்டபம் இது. உள் பரப்பு 5400 சதுர அடி. உள்ளும் புறமும் அழகிய வேலை பாடுகள் நிறைந்து தெய்வீகப் பொலிவும், கலை எழிலும் நிறைந்து தோன்றுகிறது மண்டபம். கட்டிடக் கலைஞர் கோவிந்தராவின் திட்டம்; சத்தியநாராயண பிரதர்ஸ் எழுப்பும் இந்த மண்டபத் திருப்பணி, இன்னும் ஓர் ஐம்பதாயிரம் ரூபாய் சேர்ந்தால் நிறை பெறும். எத்தனையோ அறப்பணிகளுக்கு வாரி வழங்கும் அன்பர்களும் பக்தர்களும் இந்தத் திருப்பணி நிறைவேறவும், உதவ முன் வருவார்கள் என்பதே சுவாமிகளின் நம்பிக்கை.

மண்டபம் முடிந்து ஷெனாய் நகர் சாயி மந்திரும் சென்னையில் ஓர் சிரிடியாக விளங்கும் நாள் விரைவில் நேரட்டும்.

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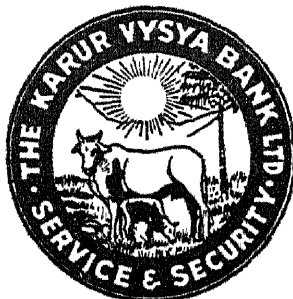
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మహాత్ముల దర్శనభాగ్య మతిదుర్లభం. పూర్వజన్మ పుణ్యవశమునగాని అది అలవడ దంటాడు.

మద్రాసు శ్రీ సాయిభక్త సమాజ వ్యవస్థాపకులు స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ మహామహిమాన్వితులని మిత్రులు చెప్పగా విన్నాను. వారిని సందర్శించానే అభిలాష క్రమంగా తీవ్రతరం కాజొచ్చింది. అదృష్టవశాత్తు వారే ఈ గ్రామానికి వేందేశారు. మిత్రులతో కలిసి ఒకనాడు వారి దర్శనానికై వెళ్ళాను.

హాలులో భక్తులు క్రిక్కిరిసి కూర్చుని వేది వున్నారు. గోడసరసన ఒక బల్లపై పుష్పమాలాలంకృతమైన సాయి బాబా పటం ప్రతిష్ఠించబడి ఉన్నది. దాని ముందు పూవులు, పండ్లు, సుగంధాదులు. హాలు అంతా అగరు ధూప పరిమళములతో గుబాళిస్తున్నది.

ఇంతలో ప్రక్క గదిలోనుండి ఒక వ్యక్తి హాలులోనికి వచ్చారు. భక్తులందరు వినఘ్రులై లేచి నిలబడ్డారు. "స్వామీజీ", "స్వామీజీ" అని గుసగుసలు వినవచ్చాయి. ఆయన ఒక కుర్చీలో ఆసీనులైనారు. నేను కుతూహలంతో తల యెత్తి చూచాను. నాకు కొంచెం ఆశ్చర్యం వేసింది. ఈయనేనా స్వామీజీ! బిరిగిగడ్డము లేదు. బారెడేసి జడలు లేవు. దండకమండలములు లేవు. కనకపాదుకలుగాని, కాషాయాంబరములుగాని మొదలే లేవు. ఆయన సామాన్యుని వలెనే ఉన్నారు. మనలాగే ఆయనకు క్రాపు జాట్లు ఉన్నది. స్వచ్ఛంగా ఉడికిన మడుగు దోవతిని, జాబ్బాను ధరించారు. ఒక సన్నని కాలువను కప్పుకొన్నారు. ఆయనే స్వామీజీ. ఆజ్ఞానుబాహువు. ఆయన ముఖం సమ్మోహన కరమైన జ్ఞానవర్చశ్శోభితము. సంతత దైవ సాక్షాత్కార పరితృప్తములైన ఆయన విశిష్ట దృక్పథాలు వాత్సల్య ప్రపూరితములు. వ్యక్తి విశిష్టతను వేషభాషలనుబట్టి నిర్ణయించ సాధ్యము కాదు.

భక్తులందరు ఒక్కొక్కరుగా స్వామీజీకి సాష్టాంగ దండప్రవామము లాచరించారు. ఆయన వారిని పేరు పేరు వరుసన దళలమనసి ఆశీర్వదించారు.

"నాయనలారా!" స్వామిజీ ప్రవచనం ప్రారంభించారు. ఆయన కంఠస్వరం జలద గంభీరము. ఆయన వాక్కు మృదుడుధురము; కరుణామయము.

"నాయనలారా! ఈ ప్రపంచం ఎటు పోతున్నది? జనులలో నీతి నియమములు అడుగంటి పోతున్నవే! పై నుంచి క్రింది వరకు ఎక్కడ చూచినా వందనేనా! అన్ని జీవితరంగాలలోను, అన్ని అంతస్తులలోను అడుగడుగునా మోసమే కానవున్నదే! అవినీతి, లంచగొండితనము, స్వార్థపరత్వము, దౌర్జన్యము. ఏదో మహిమ పేరు చెప్పి ఇంత ఒరగబోస్తామంటే ఎవరికై నా ఆశ గదా! ఈ ఆశను, దౌర్బల్యాన్ని అవకాశంగా తీసుకొని అమానుక ప్రజలను కొందరు అధోగతిపాలు చేస్తున్నారు. దీనజన సముద్ధరణ మాట దేవుడెడగు; వారిని పీడించకుండా ఉంటే మేలెంచి నట్టే కదా! స్వాముల సంఖ్య పెరిగి పోతున్నది. అందరూ స్వాములే; ఆధ్యాత్మిక చింతనం మాత్రం మృగ్యం. ఆక రక తంత్రాలకు, మాయ గారడీలకు మోసపోరాదు. షేక్స్ పియర్ ఒక నాటకంలో ఒక పాత్రచేత అవివించాడు— "ఎముకలు కొరికే చలివాధనై నా భరించ గలనుగాని, వంద కుని వహవానం డ్దణం సేపై నా భరించలేను" అని. వంద కులకు, దుష్టులకు దూరంగా ఉండడం మనం నేర్చుకోవాలి.

లోకంలో పాపం పెచ్చుపెరిగి పోతున్నది. కలియుగంలో ప్రత్యక్ష దైవమైన శ్రీ వేంకటేశ్వరస్వామి ఆదాయం కొట్లకు పడగ లెత్తినది. కుబేరునివద్ద తీసుకొన్న అప్పును చెల్లించివేస్తే ఇక ఆ స్వామి కూడా అంతర్ధామ డయే కాలం సమీపిస్తున్నది.

ఇక యువతరంలో చూడవస్తే అశాంతి ప్రబలిపోతున్నది. నిర్ణీత పథం లేదు; నియమిత లక్ష్యం లేదు. గురు పాద సంవాహనంచేసి, విద్యా సముపార్జనము చేయవలసిన విద్యార్థులు నేడు గురువు కుత్తుకను ఉత్తరించడానికి సిద్ధ పడుతున్నారు. దేవుడు లేడు; గురువు లేడు. అనాదిగా ఆచార్యత్వక బెన్నత్యానికి అలవాటమైన మన దేశం అదో గతికి దిగజారిపోతున్నది. దీని కింక విస్మృతి లేదా ఉన్నది.

గురువు

ఎంత విద్య ఉన్నా, ఎంత విజ్ఞానం ఉన్నా అది గురువు కరుణ లేక కుదుట పడదు. కర్ణాశరి లేని నౌక గమ్యాన్ని ఎట్లు చేరగలదు? పిల్లలలో దైవభక్తిని, గురుభక్తిని కుదురుకొన జేయగలిగిననాడే మన ప్రాచీన వైభవాన్న త్యాలను పునరుద్ధరించుకొన గలుగుతాము. సద్గురువును ఎన్నిక చేసుకొని అతనియందే పరిపూర్ణ విశ్వాసం ఉంచి అతని ఆడుగు జాడలలో నడవాలి, అతడే భగవత్సన్నిధిని బడయ జేయగలడు.

భగవంతుడు

ఒకసారి ఈశ్వరచంద్రవిద్యాసాగరుడు రామకృష్ణ పరమహంసను పిలిపించాడు. ఆయన విద్యా సముద్రుడు; సకల శాస్త్ర పారంగతుడని ప్రతీతి; లోకం మన్ననల నందుకుంటూ పెద్ద హోదాలో జీవితం గడుపు తున్న ధన్యజీవి ఆయన. మరి రామకృష్ణుడో విరాడంబర జీవి. సాధున త్తముడు. అంత గొప్పవాని వద్దకు వెళ్లి చెట్లు అని కొంత సంకోచిస్తూనే వినయం వై వెళ్లి విద్యా సాగరుని మ్రోల విలిచాడు. అంతట విద్యాసాగరుడు, “ఎమి రామకృష్ణా! దేవుడు ఉన్నాడని వాదిస్తావే, ఆ విషయాన్ని ఎట్లు నిరూపించ గలవు?” అని సూటిగా ప్రశ్నించాడు. దానికి రామకృష్ణుడు, “స్వామీ, ఎక్కడైనా పునాదిలేని గోపురం ఉంటుందా?” అని నిర్భీకంగా ప్రతి ప్రశ్న వేకాడు శిశువులను, పశువులను, పక్షులను, నైతం అవ్యయానంద పరవశములుగా చేయ గల విశ్వ మోహన గానమృతాన్ని వెల్లి విరియజేస్తుంది వేణువు; కాని ఆ వేణువు దానంతట అది పాడజాలదు. దానిని ఊదేనాథు డొక డుండాలి.” “అయితే లోకంలో హృదయ విదారకము లైన అత్యాచారాలు, హత్యలు, భయంకరములైన యుద్ధాలు ప్రవర్తిల్లుతూ వేలాదిగా అమాయక ప్రజలు దుర్మరణం పాలౌతున్నారే, మరి, దేవుడు నీటి నన్నిటిని

తనకు కానట్లు మాస్తూ ఊరుకుంటున్నాడేమి? దీని కేమి సమాధానం చెబుతావు. అంతటి నిర్ణయాస్వాంతుడా దేవుడు?” అని విద్యాసాగరుడు తిరిగి ప్రశ్నించాడు. దానికి రామకృష్ణుడు ఇలా బదులు చెప్పాడు: “అయ్యా! ఈశ్వర లీలలను అర్థం చేసుకోవడం సామాన్యులకు సాధ్యం కాదు. మన విజ్ఞానము, ప్రతిభ, తర్కము, హేతువాదము అక్కడ పని చేయవు. సృష్టి, స్థితి, లయములే ఆ లీలలు; వాటిని నిగమములే వర్ణించలేక పోయినవి. వాటిని అవగాహన చేసుకోవాలంటే ముందు కామక్రోధలోభ మోహమద మాత్సర్యములనే అణిచివేయవలసిందిగా ఆలవాటమైన ఇంద్రి యములను నిగ్రహించాలి. పంచేంద్రియోన్మాదమును పరి మార్చి బుద్ధిలతకు మారాకు హత్తించి సాధన చెయ్యాలి. శరీరాన్ని పరిశుభ్రంగా ఉంచుకోడానికి కష్టపడి మనం ఎన్నో చర్యలను తీసుకుంటున్నామే. అభ్యంగన స్నానాదు లాచరిస్తున్నాము. అత్తరులు పులుముకుంటున్నాము. స్వచ్ఛమైన వస్త్రాలు ధరిస్తున్నాము. మరి మనస్సు విరమించి ఉంచుకొన మన మేమి చేస్తున్నాము? మన స్సును స్వాధీనపరచుకుంటే దైవ సాక్షాత్కారమును ఎప్పటికైనా పొందవచ్చు.” దానితో విద్యాసాగరుని అహం కారము పటాసంచలై పోయినది. ఆయన రామకృష్ణునికి శిష్యుడైనాడు.

దైవ సాక్షాత్కారాన్ని గురించి స్వామీజీ ఇలా చెప్పారు:

మహాభారత యుద్ధావసానదశలో కురువృద్ధుడైన భీష్మా చార్యుడు తనువు చాలించగోరి, అంపశయ్యపై పరుండివున్న సమయంలో శ్రీకృష్ణుడు ఆయనను చూడవచ్చాడట. భీష్ముడు శ్రీకృష్ణుని చూచి కన్నీరు మున్నీరుగా విలపించ సాగాడట. “ఎమి తాతా మహారథుడవు. యోధాగ్రేసరుడవు, కంటతడి పెట్టుకొంటున్నావు!” అని ప్రశ్నించగా, భీష్ముడు, “కృష్ణా, దేవాదిదేవుడవైన నీ మహిమ తెలుసుకొన లేక పోయాను. అర్జునుని అనుగ్రహించావు. అష్టవసువులలో ఒకడనై కూడా నీ రూపాన్ని దర్శించే భాగ్యం లేకుండా ఇప్పుడు ప్రాణం విడువవలసి వస్తున్నదే అని విలపిస్తు న్నా”నని ప్రత్యుత్తర మిచ్చాడు. శ్రీ కృష్ణపరమాత్మ అంతట భీష్ముని కరుణించి తన విశ్వరూపమును సంద ర్శింపజేసి సంతృప్తుని గావించాడు.

భక్తి

భక్తిమార్గమును గురించి స్వామీజీ ఇలా అభిభాషిం చారు:

ఈశ్వరుడు అవాజ్మానన గోచరుడు, అయినా ఆయన నన్నిదిని పొందడానికి ఉత్తమమార్గ మొకటి వున్నది. అదే భక్తిమార్గము. భగవంతుడు భక్తులయిదు. పూవు పుట్టగనే పరిమళములను వెనెఱుంగును. ప్రహ్లాదునకు పుట్టుక తోడనే హరి భక్తి అలవడినది. ఎంతటి కష్టాలకు లోను భవించవలసి వచ్చినా ఆయన భక్తిమార్గము పట్టలేక. భక్తితో భగవంతుని సాక్షాత్కరింప చేరుకొన్న వలెను భాగవతోత్తముడు ప్రహ్లాదుడు.

ఒక కుగ్రామంలో నివసిస్తున్న పేద దంపతులకు రోక లేక దైవానుగ్రహమున ఒక బిడ్డ కలిగింది. దానికి ఏదేవు రాగానే గ్రామాంతరమున గల ఒక గురువువద్ద విద్య చెప్పించాలని వారు సంకల్పించారు. గురువుగారి గ్రామంలో పోవాలంటే ఒక చిట్టడవిని దాటి వెళ్లాలి. “అడవిలో నుంచి ఒంటరిగా వెళ్ళడానికి నాకు భయం వేస్తుంది. గురువుగారి దగ్గరకు వెళ్ళడం ఎట్లా?” అని బాలుడు అమ్మని అడిగాడు. “కృష్ణా, కృష్ణా” అని పిలుస్తూ వెళ్లు. భయం వుండదు, బాబూ” అని ఆమె చెప్పింది. ఆ ప్రకారమే ఆ బాలుడు ప్రతి దినం అడవిలోనుంచి వెళ్ళేటప్పుడు “కృష్ణా, కృష్ణా—నాకు భయం వేస్తోంది. తోడు రావూ?” అని దిగ్గరగా పిలిచేవాడు. శ్రీ కృష్ణపరమాత్మ ప్రత్యక్షమై వానిని ప్రతి ఉదయం అడవి చివరివరను తోడుగా వెళ్ళి దిగబెట్టి, మళ్ళీ సాయంత్రం కూడా వుండి వాళ్ళ గ్రామంవద్ద విడిచిపెట్టి వెళ్ళేవాడు. ఇట్లా వుండగా కొన్నాళ్ళకు బాలుని గురువుగారి కుమార్తెకు వివాహం ఏర్పాటైనది. శిష్యులందరు కానుకలు తీసుకు వెడుతున్నారు. బాలుడు తన తల్లిని అడిగాడు, కాను కూడా గురువుగారికి యివ్వడానికి ఏదైనా కానుక యిమ్మని. “మన వద్ద ఏమున్నది? ఆ కృష్ణుడినే అడుగు, ఆయనే యిస్తాడు” అని చెప్పింది అమ్మ. బాలుడు సరే అని అడవిలోనికి వెళ్ళి ‘కృష్ణా’ అని పిలిచాడు. శ్రీ కృష్ణుడు వచ్చాడు తన గురువుగారి కివ్వడానికి కానుక ఏదైనా యిమ్మన్నాడు. శ్రీ కృష్ణుడు ఒక పెరుగు ముంతను అతనికిచ్చాడు. అది తీసుకొని బాలుడు గురువుగారి యింటికి వెళ్ళాడు. ఇదే నా కానుక అని వినముడై ఆయనకు సమర్పించు కొన్నాడు. అందరు విలువైన కానుకలను చదివిస్తున్నారు. గురువుగారు ఈసడింపుతో పెరుగు ముంతను ఒక మూల వుంచాడు. భోజనం సమయంలో అతిథులకు వడ్డించడానికి మజ్జిగ విండుకొన్నది. అప్పుడు గురువుగారికి బాలుడు తన కిచ్చిన పెరుగు ముంత జ్ఞాపకం వచ్చి, దానిని తెచ్చి ఒక విస్తరిలో వడ్డించాడు. వడ్డించి పైకి ఎత్తడంతోనే మళ్ళీ ముంతనిండా పెరుగు తొణికిసలాడతొచ్చింది. అట్లా ఎంత

మందికి వడ్డించినా ముంతతో పెరుగు విండుగానే వుంటున్నది. గురువుగారు విస్మయాశ్చర్య చకితుడై ఈ ముంతను వీ తెనరిచ్చారని బాలుని అడుగగా “కృష్ణుడక్కడవు” అన్నాడు. నాడు బదులు చెప్పాడు. గురువుగారు గ్రహించాడు: “ఏదీ ఆ కృష్ణుని నాకు చూపించు” అన్నాడు. అమామయ్యదైన బాలకుడు గురువుగారిని అడవిలోకి రెనుకొని వెళ్ళాడు. ఆయన వెంట ఈ అద్భుత మేలితో కూడాని బిడ్డవులు కూడా నవ్వారు. బాలుడు బయట పోత ఆగి, “కృష్ణా! మా గురువుగారు నిన్ను చూడడానికి వచ్చారు. ఒక సారి ఇటు రా?” అని దిగ్గరగా పిలిచాడు. ఎవరూ రాలేదు. బాలుడు అబద్ధ మాడుతున్నాడని వాళ్ళు అనుమానించారు. బాలుడు అభిమానం వచ్చి మళ్ళీ మళ్ళీ దీనంగా పిలిచాడు, కృష్ణుడన్నయ్యను. అంతట శ్రీ కృష్ణుడు వారికి కనబడకుండా, “నీవు ఆన్నెము పున్నె మెరుగని పనివాడవు కనుక దర్శనమిస్తూ వచ్చాను. వీరందరు అంతో ఇంతో పాపం చేసినవారు, కనుక వీరికి నేను కనిపించను” అని ఆశీర్వాదంతో చెప్పాడు. అందరు అద్భుత పడిపోయి ఆ బాలుని అదృష్టాన్ని గురించి పేనోళ్ళ చెప్పకున్నారు. కనుక, భగవంతుని చేరడానికి భక్తికి మించిన మార్గం లేదు. ఐహికాముష్మిక సుఖవరం పరలను మూరగొనడానికి దైవ భక్తి ఒక్కటే శరణ్యం.

భగవంతుడు భక్తులకు అతిలోక శక్తిసామర్థ్యాలను ప్రసాదిస్తాడు. రావణ సంహార సమయంలో శ్రీ రామ చంద్రుడు సముద్రానికి వారధిని నిర్మించి లంకను చేరాడు. మరి ఆయన భక్తాగ్రగణ్యుడైన హనుమంతుడో రామ నామం జపిస్తూ ఒక్కఉదుటున లంఘించి వాయుసూర్యులన అవలీలగా కడలిని గడచివెళ్ళి రాక్షసరాజ్యాన్ని విధ్వంసం చేసి వచ్చాడు. భక్తులకు సాధ్యం కాని కార్యమంటూ ఉండదు.

మానవుడు చందమామను చేరివచ్చాడు. అతడు సూర్య మండలాన్ని సయితం చొచ్చుకొనిపోయి తిరిగి రాగల దినాలు రావచ్చు. ఫలితమేమిటి? ఈ అద్భుత కృత్యము మానవుని మేదస్సుకు, సాహసికప్రవృత్తికి కీర్తి పతాక కావచ్చు. కాని, మనశ్శాంతి ఎక్కడిది? ఒక కుటుంబం లోనివారు, ఇరుగు పొరుగుదేశాలవారు కలహించుకొనకుండా ఏకోదరులవలె పరస్పరప్రేమ గౌరవాలతో కలసి మెలసి సుఖంగా జీవించగలగడం ఎక్కువ అవసరంకాదా? దీనికి హృదయ వికాసం ముఖ్యం. హృదయ కమలమును వికసించజేసి అందు ఈశ్వర మూర్తిని సుప్రతిష్ఠితం చేసుకోవాలి. అప్పుడే మానవుల మందరం దేవుని బిడ్డలం, సోదరులం అనే భావం పొదుకొంటుంది. అప్పుడే ప్రపం

చంలో సుఖశాంతులు రాజ్యం చేయగలవు. భక్తుని హృదయ కనులమందు నీడల విహారిణి మత్త మధుసం భగవంతుడు. ఆయన భక్తసదాధీనుడు, అర్తత్రాణపరాయణుడు.

భగవంతుడు ఒక్కడే. భాషాభేదమును బట్టి నీరుకు పేర్వేరు పేరులన్నప్పటికీ ఆ పేరును చెప్పినప్పుడు ఆయా భాషల వారికి నీరు అనే పదార్థమే అర్థ మౌతున్నట్లు ఏ పేరుతో పిలిచినా దేవుడు దేవుడే. మతము లెన్నిన్నా వాటి ఆధిమత మొక్కటి. అదే ఈశ్వరారాధనము.

బాబా

ఈ సర్వమత సామరస్యాన్ని, సర్వమానవ సౌభ్రాత్రాన్ని శ్రీ సాయిబాబా ప్రచారం గావించారు. సాయిబాబా కేవలం అవతారపురుషుడు. నూటఇరవై ఎనిమిది జన్మ లెత్తినా ఆయనను గురించి పూర్తిగా తెలుసుకొనడం సాధ్యం కాదు. ఆయన భక్తులపాలిటి కల్పకరువు. మహా మసీదులో నై సప్పటికీ బాబా యథావిధిగా శ్రీరామనవమి ఉత్సవాలను జరిపించేవారు.

ఆకలిబాధతో అలమటించే వారికి, వ్యాధి గ్రస్తులై వేగే వారికి పుణ్య కర్మాచరణం పట్ల బుద్ధి ఎట్లు పోతుంది? దైవ ద్యానానికి స్థిమిత మెట్లు చేకూరుతుంది? అట్టివారికి ముందు ఉపశమనం కలిగించాలన్నారు బాబా. స్వస్థులై ఉన్నప్పుడే వారి హృదయం భక్తి మగ్నమౌతుంది. మనస్సు ద్యాన లగ్నమౌతుంది. ధనమదాంధులకు విందులు చేసి తనియ జేయడం కంటే పేదలకు ప్రేమతో వట్టెడన్నం పెట్టి అల రింపజేయడంవల్లనే జీవితం పునీతం కాగలదని చెప్పారు బాబా. గాంధీజీ కూడా మానవసేవయే మాధవసేవ అన్నారు కదా! ధర్మకార్యాలకు విరాళాలను పేకరించేటప్పుడు మీద వారు తమ శక్త్యానుసారం హృదయ పూర్వకంగా సమ ర్పించిన ధనమే ప్రేమ భాజనమని బాబా పేర్కొన్నారు. ఒకసారి ఒక వణిక్రమముఖుడు సాయిబాబా వద్దకు వచ్చి అయిదువందల బంగారు కానుకలను రాసిగాపోసి ఆయనకు కానుకగా సమర్పించ బోయాడు. బాబా అనుగ్రహించ లేదు. ఈ పాపపు సొమ్ము నాకు వలదని విరాకరించి అతనిని తరిమివేశారు. మరొకసారి ఒక పేదరాలు బాబా వద్దకు వచ్చి భక్తితో ఒక పావలా కానుకను సమర్పించింది. బాబా వెంటనే సంతస్తులై ఆ నాణెమును “హంజా, హంజా” అంటూ కనుల కద్దకొని స్వీకరించి ఆమెను ఆశీర్వదించి పంపారు. దీనజనోద్ధారకుడు బాబా. ఏనవికైనా పతిపలాపేక్షలేని చిత్తశుద్ధి ప్రధానము.

దైవద్యానము మానవులందరకు అవశ్యక ర్తవ్యము. దైవద్యానమువలన జీవితానికి సుఖశాంతులు అలవడతాయి; అవ్యయమైన చివానందం సిద్ధిస్తుంది కడకు జన్మరాహిత్యం సమకూరుతుంది. అంతకంటే కోడుకొన వరమేమి వుంటుంది?

నందకులతో, తొందరలతో సంజీభితమై శాంతికి నోడుకోని ఆధునిక జీవిత విధానాలకు అనుగుణమైన దైవ ద్యానపద్ధతిని లోకకల్యాణ సందాయకుడైన బాబా సెలనిచ్చారు. ఆయన సన్యసింప మనశీదు; సర్వసంగపరి త్యాగము చేయమనశీదు. గ్రంథపారాయణము చేయమన లేదు. కఠోర జపతపాది నిష్ఠలను శాసించలేదు. ప్రతి దినం తీరిక సమయంలో స్థిమితంగా కూర్చొని త్రికరణ శుద్ధిగా పదకొండుసార్లు “సాయిరామ” నామాన్ని స్మరించ మన్నారు. సంసారాన్ని చక్కదిద్దుకుంటూనే ఈ పనిని చేయవచ్చునన్నారు. ఏ అవస్థలో ఉన్నప్పటికీ “సాయి రామ” నామాన్ని జపించవచ్చునన్నారు. ఎంత సులభమైన పద్ధతి ఇది. బాబా కరుణామయుడు. “నావైపు భక్తితో చూడు, నీవైపు చూచి నీకేబాధలేకుండా చేస్తా”నని భక్తులకు బాస చేశారు బాబా. “నేను ఇక్కడ వుండగా నీకేమి భయములే” దని అభయమిచ్చారు. “నాభక్తుని యింట నడ యాడే కుక్కకూడా కూడులేక మాడరా” దన్నా రాయన. అక్కడ పిర్మిలో మహాసమాధిలోఉండి కూడా ఆయన ఈ అనంత విశ్వమంతా నిండి భక్తుల మొర విని ప్రేమతో అడుకొంటారు. నేను ఎవరికి ఏ కొంచెం మంచిచేసినా భగవానుడు ఆ బాబా అదేశానుసారమే చేస్తున్నాను. బాబా భవ్య సందేశాన్ని ప్రచారం చేస్తున్నాను. సచ్చిలురైన పచ్చాత్రులు అయిదుగురు నావెంట వుంటే ఈ సమస్త ప్రపంచాన్ని జయించగలనని వివేకానందుడు అన్నారు. బాబాను నమ్మిన వారికి ఎన్నడూ నష్టము లేదు; నాశము లేదు. పరిపూర్ణవిశ్వాసం ఉంచి సాయిబాబాను సంస్మరిస్తూ పుణ్య కార్యాచరణంతో భవబంధ విముక్తి పొందడమే విద్యుక్త ధర్మం!”

స్వామీజీ లేచారు. భక్తులందరు తిరిగి ఆయనకు సాష్టాంగ ప్రణామము లాచరించారు. స్వామీజీ వారికి నుదుట పవిత్రమైన ఊధివిపెట్టి మనసారా ఆశీర్వదించి ప్రసాదములు పంచిపెట్టారు. నేను జీవితం దవ్యమైన దనుకొంటూ యింటికీ తిరిగి వచ్చాను.

ఉండు యోగిపుంగవుండు కృష్ణుండు పార్థుడు ధనుర్ధ రుండు తోసనంధ్రు : నిండు హితము గూర్చు మండు సాయిభగవానుండు కేకవుండు మండు నెడల!

[ఒక ప్రత్యేక విలేఖరి—అంద్రప్రభ సౌజన్యంతో]

సాయిబాబా సేవకు జీవితాన్ని

అంకితం చేసిన శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ

శ్రీ పండితారాధ్యుల నాగేశ్వరరావు

స్వామి బాలకేశవయ్య, సాయి భక్త కేశవయ్యజీగా ప్రసిద్ధి కెక్కినప్పటినుంచి దేశంలోని సాయిబాబా భక్తులందరికీ అనేక విధముల సహాయపడుతూ వచ్చారు. దేశంలో లక్షలాదిగా వున్న భక్తులు ప్రతి విషయంలోను శ్రీ స్వామిజీ సలహాను పొందనిదే, స్వామిజీ ఆశీస్సులు లభించనిదే, ఏ పని చేయరు. ప్రతి గురువారం షెనాయ్ నగర్‌లో జరిగే బాబా పూజలకు స్వయంగా హాజరు కాజాలని వారు స్వామిజీకి జాబులు వ్రాసి సందేహాలను నివృత్తి చేసుకుంటూ ఉంటారు. స్వామిజీ బాబా పేరు మీద తప్ప స్వయంగా ఏ పని చేయరు. “అంతా బాబా దయ” అంటూ ఆయన ఏమి చేసినా చేస్తారు. “బాబాను నమ్ముకుని ఉండండి” అని హితవు చెప్తూ వుంటారు. బాబాకు కావలసింది ఏమీ లేదు. మీ పవిత్ర హృదయం మాత్రమే. ప్రతి రోజూ దినచర్యపూర్తి అయిన తరువాత పడుకోబోయేముందు బాబా నామస్మరణ చేస్తే చాలు అని సాయి నాథుని కృపా కటాక్షాన్ని పొందడానికి దగ్గర దారి చూపుతూ వుంటారు.

గత మూడున్నర దశాబ్దాలుగా ఎందరో శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ పరంగా బాబా కృపకు, బాబా కటాక్షానికి పాత్రులవుతూ వచ్చారు. వ్యాధులనుంచి విముక్తులైనారు. ఆర్థిక చిక్కులనుంచి బయట పడినారు. అయితే, బాబా ముందు కష్టాలు కల్పించి, భక్తులను పరీక్షించి ఆ తరువాత సహాయం చేస్తారన్న భావం ఒకటి ప్రబలంగా ఉంది. ఈ భావం అంత సహేతుకంగా లేకపోయినా పలువురి అనుభవం అది కావడంవల్ల ఆ ఆభిప్రాయం బాగా ప్రబలింది. యధార్థానికి బాబా కష్టాలను కలిగించరు. జన్మ జన్మలుగా పేరుకు వచ్చిన కర్మను తొలగించేందుకు భక్తులు ముందు కష్టాలను ఎదుర్కొని కర్మను అనుభవించితే, ఆ తర్వాత భక్తులను బంధవిముక్తులను చేయడం

సులభ మవుతుందని, బాబా ముందు ఈ కర్మను కడిగి వేస్తారు. స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ కూడా ముందు సులభంగానే బాబా కృపకు పాత్రులైనారు గాని, ఆ తరువాత విష వ్యాధితో బహుకాలం బాధ పడి కర్మ విముక్తులైనారు. తన సేవ చేయడానికి, తన భక్తులకు సేవచేయడానికి శ్రీ సాయిబాబా శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీని ఎన్నిక చేసే ముందు ఈ పరీక్షలకు గురి చేసినారని చెప్పడం సబబుగా కన్పించదు.

స్వామిజీ అర్హతలను గురించి వారు అంతకు పూర్వమే పరీక్షించుతూ వచ్చి పెనుగొండలో నబ్ రిజిస్ట్రారుగా ఉంటున్న కాలంలోనే సాక్షాత్కరించి ఎన్నిక చేశారు. వారి నిజాయితీ, సేవా తత్పరత, సత్యసంధత, ఋణావర్తన, నిరాదంబరత అన్నీ బాబాను ఆకర్షించినవి, వెంటనే బాబాకు తగిన భక్తుడు లభించారన్న భావం కలిగింది. బోస్టులో, బాబా చిత్రపటం ద్వారా శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీకి సాక్షాత్కారమైనారు. నాటి నుంచి నేటి వరకూ ఆ చిత్రపటం అనేక మహత్కార్యాలను సాధించింది. ఇప్పటికీ శ్రీ స్వామిజీ బాబాకు విగ్రహాలు గాక, చిత్రపటాలనే ఆవిష్కరించాలని అంటారు. అవును, కొందరికి విగ్రహారాధనలో నమ్మకం ఉండదు. కొన్ని మతాలకు విగ్రహారాధన సమ్మతం కాదు. ఆ కారణంగానే బాబా సమాధి అవుతూ తన విగ్రహాలను ప్రతిష్ఠింప వద్దని సూచించారు. షిర్డీలో కొందరు భక్తులు అధికోత్సాహంతో విగ్రహాన్ని తయారు చేయించి, ప్రతిష్ఠకు పూనుకునే సమయానికి బాబా అవతారం చాలించారు. బాబాకు తిరిగి అవతార మెత్తవలసిన అవసరం ఉంటుందని గాని, ఎత్తడం అనివార్యం అని గాని భావించి యుండ లేదు. కనుకనే నా సమాధి నుంచే నేను నా భక్తుల కోరికలను తీరుస్తాను. అభీష్టాలను నెరవేరుస్తాను- అని వాగ్దానం చేసి, ఆ వాగ్దానాన్ని అక్షరాలా పాటిస్తూ వున్నారు.

శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ అవకాశం లభించి నప్పుడు, ఆరోగ్యంగా వున్నప్పుడు ఆంధ్ర, కర్నాటక ప్రాంతాలలో విరివిగా పర్యటనలు చేసి సాయి సూక్తులను, సిద్ధాంతాన్ని ప్రచారం చేస్తూ వచ్చారు. ఆ పర్యటనల సందర్భంలో కూడా పూజలు జరిపి బాబా భక్తులకు అనేక విధాల సహాయం చేస్తూ వచ్చారు. ఇప్పటికీ చేస్తూనే ఉన్నారు. ఈ రోజు వారు గూడూరు దివ్యజ్ఞాన సమాజం వారి ఆహ్వానాన్ని పురస్కరించుకుని గూడూరు సందర్శించుచున్నారు. శ్రీ స్వామిజీ ఆధ్యాత్మిక ప్రసంగాలు పండితులకు, సామరులకు కూడా ఆకర్షణతంగా వుండి, నిగూఢమైన ఆధ్యాత్మిక విషయాలను సులభంగా బోధపరుస్తూ వుంటవి. వారి అనుభవాలనుంచి వారు బాబా లీలలను వివరిస్తూ వుంటే ప్రజలు ఉత్తేజితులై ఆధ్యాత్మిక మార్గానువర్తు లవుతూ వున్నారు. ముందు ప్రజలను బాధా విముక్తులను చేయాలనీ, ఆకలి గొన్నవారికి అన్నంపెట్టి ఊదాధ తొలగించి, ఆ తరువాత భక్తి మార్గం చూపాలని బాబా చెప్పిన మాటలను స్వామిజీ అక్షరాలా పాటిస్తారు.

నిత్య జీవితంలో అనుసరించ వలసిన విషయాలను శ్రీ స్వామిజీ ధర్మపన్నాలుగా, సూక్తులుగా సుబోధకమైన సులభ భాషలో భావాలతో వివరిస్తూ ఉంటారు. శక్తికి లోబడి దానం, ధర్మం చేయమంటారు. పది మందికి తెలియాలని ధర్మం చేసి లాభం లే దంటారు. యావకులను, పేదలను కసిరికొట్టి పంపడం మహా పాపం అంటారు. ఇవ్వలేకపోతే మంచి మాటలతో చెప్పి పంపమంటారు. భగవంతుడు సర్వాంతర్యామి. ఎప్పుడు ఏ రూపంలో ఎక్కడ సాక్షాత్కార మవుతాడో ఎవరు చెప్ప గలరు? కనుకనే అన్ని భూతాలయెడల దయ కలిగి ప్రవర్తించాలని శ్రీ స్వామిజీ చెబుతూ వుంటారు. బాబా ఆ విధంగానే భక్తులను పరీక్ష చేస్తూ వుంటారనీ, అందువల్ల సాయి భక్తులు ఎల్లప్పుడూ అందరినీ సమంగా, సాదరంగా, చూస్తూ వుండాలనీ, శ్రీ స్వామిజీ అంటారు. స్వామిజీ ప్రబోధం బాబా సిద్ధాంతాల ప్రచారానికి అమితంగా తోడ్పడుతూ వున్నది.

(ఆంధ్రప్రథ సౌజన్యంతో)



‘విష్ణుభక్తిలేని విబుధుండు విబుధుడే

పాదయుగముతోడి పశువుగక.’

—పోతన

గురుతర భద్ర పద సంసిద్ధికి గురుపాద సంసేవనమే శరణ్యం

‘అమాత్యుడు’

“దివ్యశాంతి సందేశోపదేశపరుల

శుభపదాంభోరుహము లెంత సుందరములు!”

ఇది పవిత్ర గ్రంథమైన బైబిలులోని సూక్తి.

మహాత్ముల సుందరపాదారవింద సంసేవనమువల్ల
మానితమైన మనశ్శాంతి లభిస్తుంది.

మానవుడు లోకంలో తొలిసారి కనులు తెరిచినది
మొదలు కడసారి కనులుమూసే వరకు అన్నీ సమస్యలే.
సంఘర్షణలే. రాళ్ళతట్టలను మోసి బ్రిటికే శ్రమజీవికి,
రత్నకీరీటం ధరించి దొరతనం చెలాయించే రాజాకు
కూడా భయము, కష్టచయము, బాధార్తి, దుఃఖానుభవములు
తప్పవు. ముఖ్యంగా అల్లరులతో, కల్లోలాలతో, దారుణ
హింసాకాండలతో, మారణఘోమాలతో సంఘటితమైన
ప్రస్తుత ప్రపంచంలో శాంతి ప్రాముఖ్యం ఇనుమడించింది.
దుఃఖాన్ని విరసించడం, సుఖాన్ని కాంక్షించడం ప్రతి
ప్రాణికి సహజం. శాంతిలేనిచో సుఖము లేదు. శాంతి
శ్రేయస్సును వర్ణిల్లి జేస్తుంది. అట్టి శాంతిని మహాత్ముల
దివ్య పాదధూళిని శిరసావహించి పొందవచ్చును. మహా
త్ములకు, ఋషిసత్తములకు, గురూత్తములకు మన పుణ్య
భూమి పుట్టినిల్లు కావడం మన అదృష్టం.

స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ సందర్శనభాగ్యం నాకు
లభించింది. స్వామీజీ సాయితత్వమహిమావ్వీతులు. వారు
సాయిబాబా ఘనతను కీర్తిస్తారు. ఆయన అద్భుతశీలలను
అభివర్ణిస్తారు. సన్మార్గావలంబన విధానాన్ని మనకు ఉద్ఘో
షిస్తారు. సత్యసంధత, సాదుజన సంసేవనము. సర్వమతి
సమాదరభావము, ఇష్టదైవతోపాసనము—ఇవి ఉత్తమ
గతికి స్వర్ణస్రోపాసనములని విశదీకరిస్తారు.

స్వామీజీ ఇలా చెప్పారు :

జంగమస్థానర రూపమైన ఈ సృష్టిలోని జీవరాసులలో
వరజన్మ అత్యంత ఉత్కృష్టమైనది. పూర్వజన్మ పుణ్య
పరిపాకమువలన మనకు మానవజన్మ సిద్ధించింది. ఇది
క్షణభంగురము వంటిది. ప్రాణములు బోయిన పిదప ఈ
శరీరములో ఒక్క అవయవము కూడా ఉపయోగకరము

కాబోదు. కొన్ని జంతువుల చర్మము పాదరక్షల నిర్మా
ణానికై నా వినియోగపడుతుంది. కాని, మన చర్మం
అందుకుకూడా పనికిరాదు. కనుక సమయము మించిపోక
మునుపే మనం త్వరపడాలి. అదోగతిపాలు కాకుండా
సత్కర్మాచరణముతో ఈ జన్మను సార్థకం గావించు
కోవాలి. ఆత్మసాక్షాత్కారమును సాధించడమే. సచ్చిదా
నందస్వరూపుడైన దైవసాయుజ్యమును పొందడమే
జన్మకు చరమధ్యేయం, సార్థక్యం.

అయితే, ఆత్మసాక్షాత్కారసిద్ధి అంత సులభ సాధ్యం
కాదు. ద్యేయాన్ని చేరడానికి, కామక్రోధ లోభ మోహ
మద మా తృప్త్యాది క్రూర వన్యమృగములతో,
రజస్తమో గుణాది రాక్షసులతో తాపత్రయాది
తస్కరులతో విండిన దారి తెన్ను కానని దుర్గమ
కాననాన్ని దాట వలసి వుంటుంది. మరి ఈ అరణ్యాన్ని
తరించడం ఎట్లా? దానికి ఒక్కటే మార్గం: ఆ అరణ్య
స్వరూప స్వభావాలను చక్కగా ఆకళించుకొని, విర్యక్ర
మైన మార్గం తెలిపిన గురువును ఆశ్రయించడమే ఆ
మార్గం. సద్గురు పాదసంసేవనంవల్ల గురుతర భద్రపద
సంసిద్ధిని, జన్మరాహిత్యాన్ని పొందవచ్చును. ఎంత విద్య,
విజ్ఞానం వున్నా, గురుని కరుణ లేక కుదుట బడవు.

అట్టి సమర్థ సద్గురూత్తముల కోవలో అగ్రగణ్యుడు
శ్రీ సాయిబాబా. ఆయన కేవలం అవతార పురుషుడు.
అవాఙ్మానన గోచరుడైన, విర్వికార విరంజనుడైన పర
బ్రహ్మకు సాక్షాత్తు సగుణ స్వరూపుడు ఆయన. ఆయన
దివ్యరూపమును హృదయ వదనమున విల్చుకొని ఆరా
ధించినచో అవ్యయానందపదము నందగలము.

ఋషులు, ముముక్షువులు సర్వ పాదారణంగా లోక
వ్యవహారాలను వట్టిచు కొనకుండా, జనసంఘాలకు
దూరంగా ఎక్కడో అడవులలో, కొండలపై వసిస్తూ
సాధనచేసి తమ సద్గతికి మార్గం చూసుకుంటారు. కాని,
సాయిబాబా అలాగ కాదు. సర్వసంగ పరిత్యాగియై కూడా
ఒక చిన్న మసీదును ఘశాంగా చేసుకొని జనమధ్యం

లోనే నివసిస్తూ వారి కష్టనష్టాలను నివారిస్తూ వారి శ్రేయోభివృద్ధికై తామరాకుపై సీటి బిందువువలె సాటు పడిన మహానుభావుడు.

“ఎంద రెందరుండి దిలను బాబాలు, బా—

బాలకెల్ల సాయిబాబ బాబ:

అశ్రీతా? మొక్క ‘అచ్చా కరేగ అ—

ల్లా’ యటంచు అభయలాభ మిచ్చు!”

గురువు సర్వజ్ఞుడు, సర్వసమర్థుడు, సర్వేశ్వర స్వరూపుడు, సత్కరుడా సముద్రుడు. ఏటికి ఈవలి ఒడ్డున తాబేలు వుంటుంది. అవలి ఒడ్డున దాని సిల్లలు వుంటాయి. ఆ తాబేలు కాబకాలు అవలి ఒడ్డునుంచి తమ తల్లి మోముపైనే దృష్టి నిల్చి చూస్తూ వుంటాయి. తల్లి తాబేలు వాటి వంటే నిండు వాత్సల్యంతో చూస్తూ వుంటుంది. అంతే. పిల్ల తాబేళ్ళకు అహార పానీయాలతో విమిత్తం లేదు. ప్రేమ పూరితములైన తమ తల్లి చూపులే వాటిని ప్రవర్తమానం గావిస్తాయి. అలాగే, అవంతుల విశ్వాసంతో మనం అనుక్షణం గురువును ధ్యానిస్తూ వుంటే ఆయనే పరమవాత్సల్య ప్రపూర్ణములైన దృక్కులతో మనలను సదా వీక్షిస్తూ సదసద్వివేకాన్ని ప్రసాదించి మన భారములన్నిటిని వహిస్తూ దయతో మనలను దరిచేరుస్తాడు.

సాయిబాబాను గురించి పూర్తిగా తెలుసుకొనడానికి గాని, తెలిసినంతవరకు ఆయన ఘనతను పేనోళ్ళ చాటి చెప్పడానికిగాని ఒక జన్మ చాలదు.

మానవావతారమెత్తిన సాయిబాబా సోదర మానవుల సముద్ధరణకై ఆ విర్యాణము కృపి చేశారు. ఆయన నేడు మన మధ్య లేకపోయినా పిర్రీలోని మహా సమాధినుండి ఈ అనంత విశ్వమంతా నిండి వుండి భక్తుల కోర్కెలను నెరవేరుస్తానని బాస చేశారు. భక్త చింతామణి బాబా.

ఆయన సర్వమత సమాదరభావాన్ని ప్రబోధించారు. దాని ప్రాముఖ్యం ప్రస్తుత పరిస్థితులలో ఎంతైనా ఉన్నదని వేరే చెప్పనవసరం లేదు కదా:

మతము లెన్ని వున్నా వాటి కన్నిటికి పట్టుకొమ్మ నృష్టి స్థితి లయకారకుడైన సర్వేశ్వరుడే. వివిధ భాషలలో పీరు ఆనే దానికి వివిధ పదములున్నప్పటికీ ఆ పదమును ఉచ్చరించినప్పుడు ఆయా భాషలవారికి జలమనే పదార్థమే అవబోధమవుతున్నట్లు, వ్యవహారంలో ఎన్ని పేర్లు వున్నప్పటికీ భగవంతుడు ఒక్కడే. అతడే హరి, అదినారాయణుడు, అల్లా.

“సరగ పేర్లు వేరు పరమాత్ము డొక్కడే

మతము లెన్నియో అభిమత మొకందె;

విశ్రమింప నిండు విశ్వకుటుంబికి

మందిరము, మసీదు, పాదిరి గుడి!”

సాయిబాబా తన నివాసమైన మసీదులో ప్రతి సంవత్సరం శ్రీరామనవమి ఉత్సవాలను కడువైభవంగా జరిపించేవారు.

భవసాగర తరణానికి బాబా వర్తమాన కాలపరిస్థితులకు అనుగుణమైన సులభ మార్గాలను సూచించారు. ఆయన సన్యసింప మన లేదు. యజ్ఞ యాగాదు లోనరింప మన లేదు. వేదశాస్త్రాద్యయనమును విధించ లేదు. మంత్ర తంత్రముల నుపదేశింప లేదు. ఉపవాసాది కఠోర నిష్ఠలను కాపించ లేదు. జనులకు దూరం కమ్మన లేదు. నిర్మమత్వంతో నిత్యసంసారజీవనం నెరపుతూనే ఉన్నమున కొక్కసారి తీరిక యైనప్పుడు నిర్మలమైన భక్తితో తనను, లేదా తన యిష్టచైవాన్ని పీలై నన్నిసార్లు ధ్యానించాలని చెప్పారు. “సర్వ తీర్థాభిగమనంబు, సర్వవేద సమధిగ మము సత్యంబుతో సరియుగావు” — సర్వేశ్వరుని నమ్మి సర్వదా సత్యమునే పట్కూతూ స్వధర్మాన్ని నిర్వర్తించాలన్నారు.

అన్నింటి కంటె భక్తి ప్రధానము. భక్తిలో దౌడ్డ శక్తి యిమిడి వున్నది. భక్తులకు ఆసాధ్య మనేది వుండదు. భగవంతుడు భక్తసరాధీనుడు. పూవు పుట్టగనే పరిమళించు నన్నట్లు ధ్రువుడు, ప్రహ్లాదుడు, హనుమంతుడు మున్నగు పరమ భాగవతోత్తములకు హరినామ స్మరణం ఉగ్రబాలతోనే అలవడినది. “ఇందు గలడందులేదని, సందేహము వలదు, పక్రి సర్వోపగతుం డెందెందు వెదకి చూచిన యందందే గల”డని ప్రహ్లాదుడు విరూపించినాడు. హృదయమును చీల్చి అందు సీతారాములను ప్రదర్శించిన హనుమంతుడు రామాజ్ఞను శిరసావహించి లంకను చేరడానికి సముద్రాన్ని అవలీలగా లంఘించినాడు. భక్తాగ్రేసరుడైన భీముడు నిదురించు చున్నప్పుడు సైతం ఆయన ఉచ్చాసన విశ్వాసములనుండి, ప్రతి రోమకూపంనుండి ‘కృష్ణ’ శబ్దం వినిపించెడిదట. భగవంతుడు మననుండి భక్తిని, ప్రేమను మాత్రమే కోరతాడు. మన అభీష్టముల నన్నిటిని నెరవేరుస్తాడు.

సాయిబాబా పేదలపాలిటి పెన్నిధి. ఆయన భక్తులవద్ద దక్షిణలను స్వీకరించి బీదవారికి పంచి పెట్టేవాడు. అన్నార్తులకు, రోగగ్రస్తులకు భక్తి కుదురుకొనడం దుర్లభం గనుక, ముందు ప్రతి వ్యక్తి అన్నోదకాలకు లోటు లేని ఆరోగ్యవంతుడుగా ఉండేటట్లు చేయడం అవసర మంటారు. భాగ్యవంతులకు విందులు కుడిపి సంతృప్తులుగా చేయజూడడం కంటె పేదసాదలకు ప్రేమతో పట్టెడన్నం పెట్టడంవల్ల ఎంతైనా పుణ్యం వస్తుందన్నారు. దివ్యగానికి పెట్టకపోతే మానె కొట్టి తరిమివేయడం మహా పాప మన్నారు.

భక్తులకు బాబా స్వప్నాలలో వివిధ రూపాలలో దర్శనమిస్తారు. కాని, ఆయన స్వామీజీ వెంట సంతతం లోడు పడవలె వుంటూ కర్తవ్యాన్ని ప్రబోధిస్తూ వుంటారు. బాబాకు మనవి చేసి ఆయన అనుజ్ఞ తీసినది స్వామీజీ ఏ పని చేయబోరు.

స్వామిజీ త్రికాలవేది, కోరిదే మన భవిష్యత్తును గురించి చెబుతారు. తగు సలహా లిస్తారు, ఆ మన భక్తులకు సామా తత్వాన్ని ఉపదేశించి ఆశీర్వాదించి, పిర్మిస్తుంది చెప్పించిన పవిత్రమైన ఊది (విభూతి)ని, ప్రసాదము పంచి పెడతారు. భక్తులలో కొందరికి మంత్రపూతలైన, ఐశ్వర్యాభివృద్ధికరములైన నాణెములను ప్రసాదిస్తారు. ఆయన ఎందరికో కుదరవనుకొన్న మొండి గోగములను తన మహిమ వలన నయంచేసి వారి కృతజ్ఞతను చూరగొన్నారు.

ఆతి సామాన్యనివలె కనిపించిన ఒక వృద్ధ భక్తుడు వచ్చి స్వామీజీకి ఆమిత భక్తి తాత్పర్యములతో సాష్టాంగ పాదాభివందనంచేసి ఆశీర్వాదంబొంది వెళ్లాడు. అతడు వెళ్ళిపోయిన తరువాత స్వామీజీ ఇలా అన్నారు: “ఇతడు గొప్ప ఆస్తికుడు. చాదపు నలభై సంవత్సరముల క్రిందట పేదరికంలో బాధ పడుతున్న ఇతనికి దాడుకొమ్మని ఒక నాణెము నిచ్చాను, అప్పటినుంచి ఇతడు భక్తితో బాబాను సేవిస్తున్నాడు. ఇప్పుడు లక్షాధికారి అయినాడు. పుత్రపౌత్రాభివృద్ధితో సకలైశ్వర్యములతో తుంటూగుతూ సుఖంగా వుంటున్నాడు. అయినా గర్వించక కడు విరాడంబరంగా జీవితాన్ని నెరపుతున్నాడు.”

బాబాల్లెలను వివరిస్తూ ఆయన మరికొన్ని ఉదంతాలను ఇలా చెప్పారు:

“ఒక సారి నేను కారులో ప్రయాణం చేస్తున్నాను. మా కారు ముందు మరొక కారు పోతున్నది దారిలో ఒక పకీరు మా కారుకు అడ్డంగా వచ్చి ఆపు చేశాడు. ఒక పావలా యివ్వ ఆవి నన్ను అడిగాడు. నేను సంకోచించకుండా పావలా యిచ్చాను. వెంటనే అతడు ఆ నాణెమును నోటిలో వేసుకొని మ్రింగివేసి ఇక వెళ్ళండి అన్నాడు. మేము బయలు దేరాము. కొంత దూరం పోయేసరికి మాకు ముందు పోయిన కారు ప్రమాదంలో చిక్కుకొని దానిలోనివారు గాయపడి వుండడం మేము చూచాము. బాబా ఆ పకీరు రూపంలో వచ్చి మాకారును ఆపి ఆలస్యం చేయించకపోతే మా కారు కూడా ప్రమాదానికి గురి అయి వుండేది కదా! బాబా తన భక్తులపై ఈగ నైనా వ్రాలనివ్వడు.

“ఒక సారి ఒక పేద బ్రాహ్మణుడు నా వద్దకు వచ్చి తన కష్టాలను చెప్పుకొన్నాడు. ‘భయం లేదు వెళ్లు. బాబా యాచకుని రూపంలో నీ యింటికి వస్తాడు. అతనికి నీకు

కలిగినది యిచ్చి పంపు. నీ కష్టాలు తొలగిపోతాయి.’” అని చెప్పాను. కొన్నాళ్ళకు వారి యింటికి ఒక దిన్నగాడు వచ్చి ‘అకలవుతున్నది. ఏదైనా పెట్ట’మని కోరాడు. మేము చెప్పిన మాటలు మరచి పోయిన బ్రాహ్మణుడు దిన్నగాడిని కప్పి నశింపజేశాడు. కాని బ్రాహ్మణ సేవకత్తి తనకిచ్చిన మాట జ్ఞాపకం వచ్చి గొట్టానది ఊరగా పిచ్చు గుడ్డు ఒక చోట ఆ కలగా దిన్నుని దనుగొని ఇంటికి తీసుకొనివచ్చి అన్నం పెట్టాడు. దిన్నగడు సంతృప్తుడై దీనించి వెళ్ళిపోయాడు. అప్పటినుండి ఆ బ్రాహ్మణుడు కష్టాలన్నీ తొలగిపోయి సుఖంగా వుంటున్నాడు. ఇప్పటికీ అతడు నా దర్శనానికై వస్తూ వుంటాడు.”

భారతీయ సంస్కృతి ఔన్నత్యాన్ని గురించి ఇంద అందంతరాలలో చాటి చెప్పిన వివేకానందస్వామిని గురించి, ఆహింసాశ్రంతో బ్రిటిష్ సామ్రాజ్య రాక్షసిని పారద్రోలి మనకు స్వాతంత్ర్యాన్ని సముపార్జించిన రామ భక్తుడు గాంధీమహాత్ముని గురించి స్వామీజీ తరచు ఆసక్తి చాయకంగా చెబుతూ వుంటారు.

ప్రతిఫలా పేజెరహితంగా విద్యుత్త దర్మాన్ని నిర్వర్తించా లంటారు స్వామిజీ. చిత్రశుద్ధితో పని చేసేవారికి ఎదురుండ బోదంటారు. పేదలను ప్రేమతో ఆదరించా లంటారు. పుణ్యకార్యాచరణంతో ఉన్నత గతికి పోసా నాలు నిర్మించుకోవా లంటారు. దైవధ్యానం అన్నింటి కంటె ముఖ్యమంటారు.

షెనాయ్ నగర్ (మద్రాసు) లోని సాయిమందిరంలో స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ ప్రతి గురువారం ప్రత్యేకంగా చేసే సాయి పూజలను కన్నుల నిండుగా దర్శించి తీర్థ ప్రసాదాలను స్వీకరించడానికి వేలాదిమంది భక్తులు వెడుతూ వుంటారు. పిర్మిలో ఉన్నది సాయిబాబా. అది పీఠమైతే, షెనాయ్ నగర్ లోనిది అనుబంధ పీఠం. సాయి పూజార్థం వచ్చే భక్తుల సంఖ్య ఎక్కువై పోతున్నందున ఆ సమయంలో వారు ఆరుబయట వేచివుండ నవసరం లేకుండా నడుపాయం కల్పించడానికై అక్కడ ఇప్పుడు బ్రహ్మాండ మైన సాయిమందిరాన్ని నిర్మిస్తున్నారు. దాని నిర్మాణ వ్యయానికై యథా శక్తి విరాళాలు పంపవలసిందిగా సాయి సమాజ నిర్వాహకులు భక్తులకు, అభిమానులకు విజ్ఞప్తి చేస్తున్నారు.

“నీ పాదకమల సేవయు

నీ పాదార్పకులతోడి నెయ్యమును నితాం

తాపార భూతదయయును

తాపసమందర నాకు దయపేయగదే!”

(అంద్రప్రభ సౌజన్యంతో)

కర్ణాటక సంగీత పితామహుడు

భక్త పురందర దాసు

శ్రీ వేదం రామకృష్ణ

కృపాసిద్ధులు సాధన సిద్ధులు అని రెండు విధాలు. భగవానుని సిద్ధి నొందిన వారు కృపా సిద్ధులు సాధన చేసి సిద్ధి నొందినవారు సిద్ధులు. ఐహిక పరులుగ నుండి ఉన్నట్లుండి భగవత్పరులుగ మారుట... అనే పరివర్తన మానవుల జీవితంలో అత్యంత ప్రాముఖ్యం వహించింది. వివిధ దేశముల చరిత్ర పరికిస్తే భగవత్కృపచే హఠాత్ సిద్ధి నొందిన యోగులు, యోగినులు అనేక మంది కనిపిస్తారు. ఇట్టి మార్పులలో అంతస్తు బున్నాయి. ఇందనేకమంది యోగులు భగవంతుని తమ ప్రాణనాయకునిగా భావించి, తమ్ము నాయకలుగను తలచి వారి హృదయభావాన్ని తీర్చుకుంటారు. ఇది వారి రచనలను స్వీయచరిత్రలను పరికిస్తే గోచరించే విషయం. పరివర్తన అనేది ఒక్కొక్కరికి కొంత కాలం పడుతుంది. 'పాల్' 'అగస్టిన్' 'జాన్ బినియన్' మొదలైన వారి చరిత్రలు గమనిస్తే వారి మార్పుకూ దీర్ఘమైన పూర్వ దశలున్నాయని తెలుసుకోవచ్చు.

ఆకస్మిక పరివర్తనము చెందిన వారిలో మన దేశమున కోకొల్లలు. వాల్మీకి, బుద్ధుడు, ఆశోకచక్రవర్తి, వేమన, విల్వమంగళుడు, మాధవ దేవుడు, చేలపైరఃబునఃబూద్రి, వామ దేవుడు, కాన్హో పాత్ర, తుకారాముడు, రామదాసు, నరకాదాసు, విలయత్రాయస్వామి, స్వామి జీవత్ పింగ్, ధనుర్దాసుడు, సట్టిసత్తారు, చైతన్యుడు, తులసీదాసు—మున్నగు మహనీయుల కోవకు చెందినవాడే—కర్ణాటక యోగి పురందర దాసున్ను.

పురందరుని పూర్వ నామం కృష్ణప్ప నాయకుడని కొందరు, శ్రీనివాస నాయకుడని కొందరు అంటున్నారు. ఈ పేరు మాత్రం సందిగ్ధంగా ఉంది. ఒకరికే రెండు పేర్లు ఉండినా ఉండవచ్చు.

ఈయన పదునైదవ శతాబ్దం ఉత్తరార్థంలో—పూనాకు పదునెనిమిది మైళ్ళ దూరమున గల 'పురందరగడ' లో

క్రీ. శ. 1484 లో జన్మించాడు. ఇతని తండ్రి వరదప్ప నాయకుడు. తండ్రి వలె ఇతనూ కన్నడభాషలో గొప్ప పండితుడు. చిన్ననాడే చక్కగా విద్యల నేర్చినాడు. పదహారు సంవత్సరములు నిండాయి. ఒక కన్యనిచ్చి వివాహము చేసినారు. తండ్రి వలె ఇతడు పరంపరాగతమైన రత్నము వ్యాపారము చేయుచు అపారమైన ధనాన్ని సంపాదించినాడు. అతని తండ్రి లోభి. ఇతడూ తండ్రి కంటే పరమ లోభి. బుద్ధాగ్రేసర చక్రవర్తి. కాని వ్యాపారములో గొప్ప నేర్పరి. హండి (విజయ నగరము), గోల్కొండ మొదలైన చోట్లకు వెళ్ళి రాజులకు రత్న, మాణిక్యాలను అధికమైన వెలకు విక్రయించి ఎక్కువ ధనాన్ని సంపాదించి 'నవకోటి నారాయణు'డని పేరొందినాడు.

ఆయన యోగిగా పుట్ట లేదు. వైరాగ్యం అంటే అతని హృదయంలో సంక్షోభం కలిగిస్తుంది. దేవుడే భక్తిప్రదారానికై అతణ్ణి వరించాడని చెప్పుకుంటారు. అతడు దేవుణ్ణి వెదక లేదు. దేవుడే అతణ్ణి వెదుక్కుని వచ్చినాడు.

ఈయన కర్ణాటక సంగీతానికి ప్రారంభకు డంటారు. కన్నడ భాషలో వేలకొలది కీర్తనలను, ప్రజానీకాన్ని సంబోధిస్తూ—వ్రాశాడు. వారికి ఆధ్యాత్మిక నైతిక చైతన్యం కల్గించుననై ఉన్నవి. ఈగాయక శిఖామణి గేయములు ఆయన బుర్రనుండి పుట్టినవి కావు. సహచరుల ప్రేమచే కొట్టుకొను హృదయపు లోతులనుండి పుట్టినవే.

శ్రీనివాస నాయకుని లోభత్వం పినినారితనం నానాటికి మోచ్చుతున్నవి. రత్నవర్తకమే గాకుండా వడ్డీ వ్యాపారం కూడా ప్రారంభించాడు. వడ్డీని రాబట్టుకోవడంలో అతడొక 'షైలాక్', లేదా నక్షత్రకుడు. కూరంగా కూడా ప్రవర్తించేవాడు. చివి గుడ్డలు ధరించేవాడు. ప్రాణాల్ని నిలుపుకోడానికి కావలసిన ఆహారాన్ని మాత్రమే తుణిచే నాడు. ఒక్క కానీ వధలుకొనుటకంటే అతడు ప్రాణా

న్నెనా వదలుతాడు. ఎవరైతే బిచ్చమిడిగితే మహా బాధతో మూలగుతాడు. అట్టి సుగుణాలతో ఉండే శ్రీనివాసాన్ని కుణ్ణి చూచి ప్రజలు సంతోషించుకునేవారు.

అతనియందు గాఢ ప్రేమ కలది ఒక ప్రాణిమే. అమె అతని భార్య సరస్వతీబాయి. కులపి శిలవని. పరమోదార భగవంతునందు మహా భక్త. దానం చేస్తాడుంటే అమె దగ్గర ఒక్క కానీ ఉండదు. భర్త పిసినిగొట్టు చిన్నపు పలమిది అనుకొని మనో వ్యధను మోసంతో అనుభవిస్తూండేది.

శ్రీనివాసుని పరివర్తనకు రెండు ఏబాదు అరబా ఉన్నాయి. ఒక పండుగనాడు భీమానిదిలో (గోద్రదానా నది) స్నానం చేయుటకు తన్నుని సరిగా పోనని పట్టింది. అక్కడ పూజ చేసినప్పుడు బ్రాహ్మణులకి అక్షిణ ఇవ్వటం అనివార్యమైన ఆచారం. ఇది ఇతనికి పరిరోధనమే. దక్షిణకై రూక లిస్తే తాను బ్రతుకనని తలంచాడు. పెట్టె నంతా గాలించి, చివరికి అరిగిపోయిన రాగి నాణాన్ని పట్టుకొచ్చాడు. భార్యా సమేతుడై, నదిలో చాలాదూరం పుట్టి మునకు పోయి స్నానం చేశాడు. వెనుదిరిగి వస్తుంటే వృద్ధబ్రాహ్మణ యాచకుడు ఎదురయ్యాడు. చేత నున్న అరిగిపోయిన రూకను ఇవ్వవలసి వచ్చేసే అని మహా బాధ పడ్డాడు ఇంతలో యుక్తి తోచింది దతానికి. ఎవ్వరికీ అగ పడకుండా తన చేతనున్న అరిగిపోయిన నాణాన్ని క్రింద పేలి పాదాలతో త్రొక్కి పట్టాడు. పైకమంతా పోగొట్టుకున్నానని దిగ్గరగా అరిచాడు వెదికేటట్లా. ఏమీ కనబడ నట్లా, అభినయించాడు. బహిరంగంగా విలపించాడు. విప్రుడు విన్నయంతో వెళ్ళిపోయాడు. అతని భార్య పడు తున్న బాధ వాగతీతం. విశేషమైన దినాల్లో చూడ తన భర్త పిసినిగొట్టుగా నున్నందుకు అవమానంతో తల వంచుకొన్నది. ఇది ఒక సంఘటన.

మరొకటి:

ఒక బ్రాహ్మణుడు తన కొడుకు ఉపనయనంకొరకు ధనసహాయం కోరుతూ శ్రీనివాసుని వద్దకు వచ్చాడు. 'సరే రేపురా మాపురా' అని అరు నెలలు తిప్పించాడు. ఫలితం కనబడలేదు. తుదకు శ్రీనివాసుడే లోబడవలసి వచ్చింది. ఒక ధన పేటికను తెరచి నాణేలనంతా ప్రోగు పోశాడు ఒక చోట. బ్రాహ్మణుడు సంతోషించాడు. కానీ ఆ సంతోషం చాలాకాల ముంద లేదు. ఎందు కంటే ఆ నాణాలన్నీ అరిగి పోయాయి. ఆ రాశిని పూర్తిగా తీసుకోవాలి అనుమతి లేదు.

"శ్వరగా ఈ రాశినుండి ఒక్క నాణాన్ని ఏరి తీసుకో" అన్నాడు శ్రీనివాసుడు. బ్రాహ్మణుని హృదయం క్రుంగి పోయింది. అట్లాల్లాడు. వెనదిపోయాడు. అయితే శపింపలేదు.

బ్రాహ్మణునికి అంతో యుక్తి స్ఫురించింది. 'వాకిటి గవంటి సాధించుకో' లేదా సంతోషి వాకిట్లో సాధించుకో వచ్చునని, అతడు సరస్వతీబాయిని సమీపించాడు. తన సంగతి అంతా చెప్పుకున్నాడు. అమె తనయొక్క దుస్థితి నంతా స్మరించుకొంది. వెంటనే తన ముక్కు పుడకను అతని కిచ్చిపేసింది. ఆ బ్రాహ్మణుడు దాన్ని తీసుకొని దోయి శ్రీనివాసుని అంగట్లోనే అన్యుజూపాడు. తన భార్య ముక్కునువకను చూచి అశ్చర్య పడ్డాడు. ఆ నగకు ముద్ర పేసి 'పెట్టెలో' పెట్టాడు. ఇంటికి వచ్చాడు. భార్యను పిలిచి అమె బోనీ ముక్కును చూచి "సర్వ నాశనం చేస్తున్నావే, ముక్కుపుడకను ఏం చేశావు?" అని అరిచాడు.

సరస్వతీబాయి మార్పిల్లినది. ముక్కుపుడకను బిచ్చగాని కిచ్చితి నన్నచో తన ప్రాణాలు తీయబడతాయని ఆమెకు తెలుసు. చాలా సేపు యోచించింది. చివరకు 'పుడక విరిగి పోయింది. ఇంట్లో 'పెట్టి యున్నా'నని అబద్ధ మాడింది.

శ్రీనివాస నాయకుని సందేహాలు తీరాయి. ఆమె బుద్ధి పూర్వకంగా పుడకను ఇచ్చి పేసింది. నాయకుడు దీని అంతుపొంతూ ఉనుక్కోవలేనని చూచాడు. గట్టిగా "సరస్వతీ! నీకు ప్రాదాలపై ఆశ ఉంటే దాన్ని వెంటనే తీసుకురా" అని అరిచాడు. లోపలికి వెళ్లింది. తలుపు గడియ పెట్టుకుంటుంది. దారీ తెన్నూ తెలియ లేదు. విషం కలుపు కొంటి గిన్నెలో. ఆమె సర్వేశ్వరునితో "ఒక విప్రుడి సత్కార్యమునకు తోడ్పడుటకై నేను ఆ విధంగా చేశాను. అది నా పతికి అప్రీతికరం. పతియూ దైవమే కదా! నా దేహప్రాణాలను నీ కర్పిస్తా." ఆమె దాన్ని త్రాగనుండగా ఆ గిన్నెలో ఆ పుడక ప్రత్యక్షమైంది. ఆమె అనందపర వశమైంది. 'ఆ ముక్కు పుడకను చూపలేని ఆమెను చంప వలసిందే' అని తీర్మానించుకొని అటు యిటు పవారు చేస్తున్నాడు నాయకుడు. ఆమె వచ్చింది. పుడకను తెచ్చింది. అతడు పరమాదృతంగా వివశత చెందాడు. వెర్రెత్తిన వాని వలె అంగడికి పరుగెత్తి పోయాడు, పెట్టెను తెరిచాడు. అక్కడ అది లేదు. ఆయనకు బోధ పడింది. అరునెలలు ప్రతిదినం తన గడపనెక్కి వచ్చుచున్నవాడు సర్వేశ్వరుడే అని అప్పటికి తెలుసుకొన్నాడు. భగవత్సంకల్పానికి తన్ను అర్పించు కొన్నాడు. అనాటి రాత్రే అతని జీవి

తంలో మార్పు వచ్చింది. “మోసపోదనల్లో” (అన్నా) ఇంత కాలం దేవుణ్ణి తెలుసుకోకుండా మోసపోయాను కదా! అనే కీర్తన మొట్టమొదట అతని హృదయము నుండి వెలువడినది.

మరునా డుదయాననే లేచాడు. కాలకృత్యాలు తీర్చు కున్నాడు. ఆ పురందరగడతో ఒక మహాద్భుతం జరి గింది నాడు. ధనం, నగలు, వస్తువులు, దాన్యం—దాసు లనుపిలిపించి పంచిపెట్టాడు. భార్య ఒక పైన కూడా మిగల్చ లేదు. గృహమంతా శోధించాడు. భార్య స్వాధీనంలో ఉన్న బంగారు బరిణితో సహా ధర్మం చేశాడు.

అక్కడినుండి పాదచారియై పండరీ పురం చేరాడు. చంద్రభాగావదిలో స్నానం చేయటం శ్రీ విఠలనాథుని త్రికాలములలో సేవిస్తూ, భిక్షులతో ఉదరపోషణ చేసుకుంటూ పండ్రెండు సంవత్సరములు భగవంతుని ఆరాధించాడు. ఇంతలో ఆ ప్రాంతంలో మహమ్మ దీయుల హింసాకాండ అధిక మైంది. అందువల్ల హంపి విజయనగరానికి నాయకుడు చేరాడు. శ్రీకృష్ణరాయలను దర్శించినాడు. ఇతణ్ణి చూచి ఆశ్చర్యపోయాడు. తన అప్పటి స్థితిసంతా రాయలకు వివేదించినాడు.

వ్యాస (తీర్థ)రాయస్వామిని (క్రీ. శ. 1478-1519) సాకువ నరసింహరాయలనుండి అచ్యుత రాయలవరకు అద రించిన వారే. వీణావాదనమున తనకు గురువైన వ్యాస రాయలను పిలిపించి, తనకు మిత్రుడైన శ్రీనివాస నాయకు నకు మంత్రోపదేశ మిప్పించాడు—శ్రీ కృష్ణదేవరాయలు. ఆ యతీశ్వరుడు పురాణములను సాంగోపాంగముగా నేర్చి శ్రీనివాస నామమును ‘పురందర విఠలుడు’గా నామకరణం వెలువరించినాడు.

వ్యాసరాయల కిష్యులలో పురందరుడు భక్తుడు. వారి రాజా కవి. పురందర దాసులో ప్రగాఢమైన భక్తి అభివృద్ధి చెందింది. భిక్షుల చేస్తూ, జీవనాన్ని గడుపుతూ భగవత్ పరణములను సేవిస్తూన్న దాసు దొక్కడే అని తన గీతాల్లో వ్యాసరాయల వర్ణించి యున్నాడు. సుమారు 4,75,000 కృతులు వివిధ రంగాలలో రచించి యున్నాడు. వానిలో కొన్ని మాత్రమే లభ్యములు. ఇప్పటికీ అము ద్రితంగా ఎన్నో తెలుగు లిపిలో తాళపత్రములలో తంజా పూరు సరస్వతి మహాల వుత్తకథాంధాగారమున విక్షిప్త ములై యున్నవి.

అనాటి సమకాలీన సాహిత్యాన్ని సరికిస్తే ప్రబంధ కవులలో ప్రసిద్ధుడైన రామరాజ భూషణునిపై కూడా పురం దరుని సంగీత ప్రభావం పోకిందా అనిపిస్తుంది కొన్నిచోట్ల.

తెనాలి రామలింగడు—రామకృష్ణుడై, ఉద్భూతారాధ్య చరి త్రను ప్రాపి తాతాచార్యులను ఉడికాడించి తర్వాత వయస్సు భక్తి ముదిరిన తర్వాత పాండురంగ మాహాత్యుని వ్రాసినాడు. ఈ పాండురంగ మాహాత్యుని వ్రాయడానికి, పురందరుని పండరీపుర భక్తి ప్రచారం ఇతనిపై కూడా పోకిందేమో! చరిత్రకారులే నిర్ణయించవలసి ఉంది.

వ్యాసతీర్థులు మాధ్వసాంప్రదాయ యతి. పురందర దాసున్నా దీక్ష వహించి మధ్వమత సిద్ధాంతములను వ్యాపింపజేస్తూ పఠకీర్తనలను రచించి యున్నాడు.

పురందరునకు లౌకిక దుఃఖ శృంఖలములు విడిపోయి నవి. భగవదనుగ్రహ ప్రాప్తి ప్రాప్తించింది. తన్మ యత్వము చెంది అంటున్నాడు.

‘బదుకెడెను బదుకెడెను భవహింగితు
పదుమనాభ పాదదొయిమె ఎనగాయ్తు’—

“బ్రతికెపోయాను, బ్రతికిపోయాను—భవము నాశ మయింది. పద్మనాభుని (పరమాత్ముని) పాద భక్తి నాకు దొరికింది” అని.

తన్ను సంస్కరించి తన కొక పవిత్ర మార్గాన్ని చూపించిన వ్యాసతీర్థులను

“ఎన్నో జన్మముల సుకృతఫలం దొరికింది
వ్యాసరాయల చరణ కమలముల దర్శనమువల్ల
కులకోటి పాపన మయింది—

శ్రీ వల్లభుని భజించుటకు అర్హత కలిగింది—” అని స్తుతించాడు, పురందరదాసు. దండాచారములను కటువుగా విరసించాడు, పురందర దాసు. ‘పదుమనాభ నలివేసభకుతి యిల్లద వైరాగ్యఉదర వైరాగ్య వల్లదెమత్తేను’— భగవంతుని ఎడ కొంచెమైనా భక్తిలేవి వైరాగ్యం ఉదర వైరాగ్యం అంటా దాయన.

అంతే కాదు—

‘తనుక వీరొకగద్ది ఫలవేసు
మనదల్లి దృఢభక్తి యిల్లద మనుజరు’

మనసులో దృఢభక్తి లేని మనుజులు దేహమును నీటిలో ముంచితే మాత్రం ప్రయోజన మేమిటి? అని ప్రశ్న వేసి—దానికి వివరణగా—

‘నేనుమ్మ బరువుదే ముక్తి’ (ఊరకే కలుగునా ముక్తి)
అని ప్రారంభమగు కీర్తనలో

‘మనదల్లి దృఢనిదలేకు

జనరసంసర్గవ సీగలుబేకు
అనుమాన వసుదిడబేకు____
తన్నమనవ శ్రీహరిగె ఒప్పినబేకు
వ్యాపారవసు దిడబేకు____
పాపరహిత నాగబేకు
జ్ఞానదాపద బెళకినలి ఒడ్డాడబేకు'____

'మనస్సులో దృఢ ముందాలి. జనుల సంసర్గం విడవాలి. అనుమాన ముండకూడదు. తన మనస్సును శ్రీహరి కర్పించాలి. వ్యాపారం వదులుకోవాలి. పాపరహితుడు కావాలి. జ్ఞానదాహపు వెలుతురులో నడవాలి:—అని ఉపాయం చెప్పారు.

పురందరుని దృష్టి విశాల మైనది. ఆయనకు కలిగిన పరివర్తనలో మతఃస్థాంతముల భేదముల ప్రసక్తియే లేదు. లౌకిక దుఃఖాశృంఖలములు వీడిపోయి భగవదనుగ్రహప్రాప్తియే—ఆ పరివర్తన సారాంశం.

పురందరుని పదాలను పరిశీలిస్తే నాటి సమాజ జీవితం దర్శణములో బింబంలా గోచరిస్తుంది. వేమనవలె సమాజంలో ఉండే అనినీతి సంతా చక్కగా చిత్రించాడు. తను చివరి దశవరకూ హంపీవిజయ నగరంలోనే ఉండి సన్న్యాసము స్వీకరించి పుష్య బహుళ ఆమావాస్య మంగళవారం జనవరి 2-1584 సంవత్సరమున భగవత్పాన్నిధ్యం చేరాడు పురందరుడు. ఇది ఇప్పటికీ జరిగి నాలుగువందల సంవత్సరాలపై న ఐంది.

పురందరునికిగల తత్త్వజ్ఞానం, భగవద్భక్తి ఆవ్యాజమైనవి. భక్తిప్రచారమునకు ఆయన పాడిన మధురగేయాలు విశ్వజన హృదయాకర్షకములు. ఆవే ఆతనికి అజరామర కీర్తిని తెచ్చాయి.

భగవద్భక్తుల గుణం, వైభవం, కీర్తనం ఎంతచేసినా తృప్తి తీరంది. అట్టి గుణ కీర్తనం చేసిన వారే ధన్యులు.

భగవత్పాన్నిధ్యం భక్తుల ద్వారానే కలుగుతుంది. అజ్ఞానాంధ కారంలో చరించే మానవతతికి ఇట్టి వారే దివ్య జ్యోతులు. అట్టి జ్యోతులలో పురందర దాసొకడు. అందుకే త్యాగరాజువంటి భక్తుడుకూడా.

'దురిత వ్రాణము లెల్లను
పరిమార్చెడి హరిగుణములఁ బాడుచు నెప్పుడున్
పరవకుడై వెలయు పురం
దరదాసుని మహిమలను తలచెద మదిలోన్'

అని అన్నాడు ప్రహ్లాద భక్త విజయంలో.

అందుకే కన్నడ దేశంలో 'పురందరదాసు, డొక్కడే దాసుడుగాని ఇతరులు దాసులు కారని' (దాసరేందర దాస రయ్య పురందర దాసర) ఒక లోకోక్తి కూడా బహుళంగా వ్యాపించింది.

పురందరుని జీవితమే తత్త్వమయమైంది. శాస్త్రాధ్యయనం, వాక్యార్థం, శుష్కకర్మలతో భగవంతుడు ప్రీతి చెందడు. ముక్తి లభించదు. అంతః శుద్ధి, హృదయ పరివక్ష్యం-అత్యవసరం దేవుని దర్శించుటకు. దేవుణ్ణి దర్శించటానికి—తిరిగి తిరిగి అలసి పోనక్కరలేదు. మాటలు నేర్వ నక్కర్లేదు. గ్రంథాలు తిరగేయ నక్కర్లేదు—ఈ విస్ఫారమైన నిష్ఠలను తెగ అందించాడు.

అట్టి పురందరుడు, గురువుగా, దాసశ్రేష్ఠుడుగా, దయా విధిగా, పేర్గాంచాడు. ఆయన ఆనుదినం ప్రార్థించి పువీ తమైన ఆ పాండురంగ విఠలుని మనమూ ప్రార్థిద్దాం!

'భీమాతీర వివాసాయ
పండరీపుర వాసినే
పాండురంగ ప్రకాశాయ
విఠలాయ నమోనమః'

'వలు తీర్గంబులఁ గ్రుంకుకంటె మహిలో భక్తాంఘ్రి పానీయములే
తలమీఁదన్ జికిలించుకోదగును.....'

—యాభావాక్కుల అన్నమయ్య

'సద్గురువు కృప ఒక్కటే ఇహ, పర లక్ష్మ్యాల

సాధనకు సులభమార్గం'

శ్రీ 'సత్యాన్వేషి'

భౌతిక, ఆధ్యాత్మిక లక్ష్యాలను సాధించడానికి ప్రతి ఒక్కరికి ఏదో రూపంలో గురువు అవసరమన్న సత్యాన్ని విజ్ఞతగల ప్రతి ఒక్కరూ అంగీకరించడం తథ్యం. భౌతిక లక్ష్యాల సాధనకంటే, ఆధ్యాత్మిక లక్ష్యాల సాధనకు అనువైన సద్గురువు లభించడం దుర్లభం. ఆత్మ సాక్షాత్కారాన్ని పొందిన సద్గురువు ఒక్కడే జీవిత లక్ష్య సిద్ధికి తోడ్పడ గలుగుతాడు. వశిష్టుడు, సాందీపని మహర్షులను గురువులుగా స్వీకరించి రాముడు, కృష్ణుడు వంటి అవతార మూర్తులు కూడా కృతార్థులైన విషయాన్ని గుర్తించక తప్పదు. అట్టి సద్గురువుల కోసకు చెందిన మహనీయుడు పిర్రీ సాయిబాబా అన్న యథార్థతను ఆ మహిమాన్విత జీవితాన్ని తరిచి చూచిన వారికి బోధనడక సూనదు.

ఒక సారి కాకాసాహెబ్ దీక్షిత్ అనే భక్తుడు పిర్రీ సాయిబాబాను "మీరు పిర్రీ వదిలివెడతారా?" అని ప్రశ్నించాడు. ఆవునది బాబా అనగానే, ఎక్కడికి అని మరొకరు అత్రతతో అడిగారు. మహోన్నతస్థలికి అని బాబా అన్నారు. అక్కడకు మార్గం ఏది అని ప్రశ్నించగా, "అక్కడకు అనేక మార్గాలున్నవి. ఇక్కడనుంచి (పిర్రీ) ఒక మార్గం ఉన్నది. అతి క్లిష్టమైన మార్గం. మార్గచుభ్యంతోనే అడవులలో పులులు, తోడేళ్ళు ఉన్నవి" అని బాబా చెప్పారు. 'ఒక మార్గదర్శకుడు ఉంటే కష్టమేమిటి?' అని వెంటనే కాకాసాహెబ్ అడిగారు. 'అప్పుడు పరవాలేదు. పులులు, తోడేళ్లు బారిపడకుండా ఆ మార్గదర్శకుడు సహసరి గమ్య స్థానానికి చేర్చగలడు. అట్టి వ్యక్తి లేనప్పుడు అడవులలో దారి తప్పడమో, ఏ అగాధంలోనో పడిపోవడమో తప్పదు' అని బాబా ఒక హెచ్చరిక చేశారు.

భౌతిక రంగంలో కంటే, ఆధ్యాత్మిక రంగంలో లక్ష్య సాధనకు సద్గురువు అవసరం ఎంతైనా కలదన్న విషయం సాయిబాబా పై వాక్యాలవల్ల కేటతెల్ల మౌతుంది. ఇహ, పరసుఖాలను, లక్ష్యాలను సాధించడానికి, నట్టేట నానను

నడుపుతూ భద్రంగా, మనయానంగా ఒక ఒడ్డును చేర్చు గల ఉత్తమ నానిపడు సద్గురువు. అట్టి సద్గురువు స్వర్గ సూత్రాన, కృపసూత్రాన నన్ని జన్మల పాపాలైనా పటా పందల మౌతవి. అక్కజ్ఞానం, మానసిక శాంతి వమహారు తుంది. ఇహ, పరసుఖాలు కరతలాపలక మౌతవి. మతసంబంధమైన ఉపన్యాసాలు వినడం ద్వారాగాని, మత గ్రంథాలు చదవడం ద్వారాగాని మనం సాధించజాలని జీవిత లక్ష్యాన్ని, మహనీయుల సాంగత్యం, కృపద్వారా సాధించడం లేలికవుతుంది. నక్షత్రాలన్నీ కలిపినా ఇవ్వ లేని కాంతిని సూర్యుడు ఎలా ఇవ్వగలడో, అలానే పవిత్ర మకగ్రంథాలు, సూక్తులు కలుగజేయలేని ఆధ్యాత్మిక జ్ఞానాన్ని, ఆత్మసాక్షాత్కారాన్ని సాధించడంలో తోడ్పడమే కాక, జీవన సమన్వయం సద్గురువు తన కృపద్వారా క్షణంలో పరిష్కరి చడం కూడా తథ్యం. ఇందుకు పెక్కు దృష్టాంతరాలు సాయిబాబా జీవిత విశేషాలలో మనకు గోచ రిస్తాయి. భీమాజీ పాటిల్ అనే వారు రామ్ముజిబ్బుతో మరణ బాధపడేవారు. చివరకు క్షయగా మారింది. ఎన్ని చికిత్సలు చేసినా ప్రయోజనం లేకపోయింది. బాబా భక్త కోటిల్ ఒకరైన నానాసాహెబ్ చందార్కర్తో ఆయన సంప్రతించి పిర్రీకి వెళ్ళారు. పూర్వ జన్మ దుష్కర్మ పలి తంగా ఈ బాధపడుతున్నావని, తానేమీ చేయ ఏలుకాదని బాబా మొదట్లో అన్నారు. ఆ రోగి బాధ భరించలేక బొబ్బలు పెడుతూ బాబా కృపకై ప్రార్థించాడు. బాబా హృదయం కరిగి "ఇక అందోళన పడకు. నీ కష్టాలు అంతిమ దశకు వచ్చినవి. ఇక్కడ కాలుపెట్టవ వారికి సుఖం తప్పదు. ఈ పకీరు చాలా కరుణార్థి హృదయుడు. రోగాన్ని నివారించ జేసి, అందరినీ ప్రేమతో, వాత్సల్యంతో కాపాడుతాడు" అని అన్నారు. ఆ క్షణంనుంచే ఆ రోగి పరిస్థితి మారి పోయింది. ఆ తర్వాత అతని రోగం పూర్తిగా పోయింది. కులాసాగా ఇంటికి తిరిగి వెళ్ళాడు.

ఒక సారి శ్రీమతి రాధాబాయి దేశ్‌ముఖ్ అనే వృద్ధ మాత పిర్మీకి వచ్చి బాబానుంచి ఉపదేశం పొందాలనే సంకల్పంతో ఉపవాస దీక్షను ప్రారంభించింది. బాబా తన వద్దకు పిలిపించి తనకు ఒక గురువు ఉన్నాడని చెబుతూ ఆయన తన కేమీ ఉపదేశంకాని, మంత్రంకాని బోధించలేదని. ఆయన నన్ను రెండు పైసలు దక్షిణ ఇవ్వాలి కోరని. మొదటి పైస పరిపూర్ణ విశ్వాసం, రెండవ పైస ఓరిమి, క్షమ. ఈ రె.టితోనే తన గురువు తృప్తి పడ్డారని, అటు వంటి పరిస్థితి అవసరమని చెబుతూ గురు కృపావీక్షణంతోనే సుఖశాంతులు కలుగుతువని, మంత్రా వికీగాని, ఉపదేశానికీగాని యత్నించ వద్దని, త్రివరజతుర్ధిగా గురువును దృష్టిలో నిడుకొని యత్నిస్తే పరమార్థాన్ని విస్సందేహంగా సాధించవచ్చని అమెకు నవ్వుజెప్పి, అమెచే కఠోరదీక్షను బాబా విమోచింప జేశారు.

డాక్టర్ పిళ్ళె అనే బాబా భక్తుడు ఒక సారి సారి కు పుతో యమబాధపడుతూ ఉండే వాడు. "బాధ పడలేకుండా ఉన్నాను. మరణం వచ్చినా సంతోషమే. పూర్వజన్మకర్మ ఫలితమని తెలుసు. ఇప్పుడు బాధ తగ్గించి, మరి పది జన్మలలో అనుభవించేటట్లు చేయాలని బాబాను ప్రార్థిస్తున్నాను" అని కాకాపాహెద్ దీక్షితతో అంటాడు. బాబాకు ఆ విషయం చెప్పగానే "భయపడ వద్దను. పది జన్మలలో ఎందుకు బాధ పడాలి: పది రోజులలో పూర్వ జన్మ కర్మ ఫలం అనుభవించేయ్యవచ్చు భౌతిక, ఆధ్యాత్మిక శ్రేయస్సును కూడే నేను ఇక్కడ ఉండగా, మరణానికై ఎందుకు ప్రార్థించాలి: ఇక్కడకు తీసుకురా. అతని బాధలను చివరిస్తాను" అని దీక్షితతో బాబా అంటారు. డాక్టరు రాగానే కూర్చోమని "పూర్వజన్మల ఫలితం అనుభవించక తప్పదు. సర్వకాల సర్వావస్థలయందు భగవంతుని స్మరిస్తే, ఆయనే కాపాడుతాడు. ఆత్మార్పణ బుద్ధితో ఆయన పాదాలకు మ్రొక్కి, ఆయన ఏమి చేస్తాడో చూడు" అని బాబా అన్నారు. "నీ కురుపుకు ఉన్న కట్టు తీసివెయ్యి. ఒక కాకి వస్తుంది. ముక్కుతో పొడిచి తీసేస్తుంది. దానితో నీ బాధ తగ్గుతుంది" అన్నారు. ఇంతలో మసీదు దీసాలు తుడిచే అబ్దుల్ వచ్చాడు. తలవని తలంపుగా అతని కాలు డాక్టర్ కురుపుమీద పడింది. దానితో ఆ కురుపులోంచి ఏడు నారి పురుగులు ఒక్క సారి బయటకు వచ్చాయి. క్రమేపీ బాధ తగ్గింది. పది రోజులలో పరిపూర్ణారోగ్యం చేకూరింది. ఇలాంటి ఘట్టాలెన్నో మనకు కానవస్తవి.

మరొక నద్గురువు శిష్యుడైన పంత్ అనే అతను ఒక సారి పిర్మీకి రావడం జరిగింది. మసీదుకు చేరగానే ఆయన మూర్ఛ వచ్చి పడిపోయాడు. బాబా కృపవల్ల తర్వాత

స్పృహ వచ్చింది. అతను మరొక గురువు శిష్యుడని బాబా దివ్యదృష్టి ద్వారా తెలుసుకొని "ఏ పరిస్థితులలో కూడా నీ గురువును వదలకు. అతనినే నమ్ముకొని ఉండు. సర్వకాల సర్వావస్థలయందు ఆ గురువువస్తే భక్తి ప్రపక్షాలు కలిగి, పరిపూర్ణ విశ్వాసం ఉంది జీవించు" అని ప్రబోధించగానే పంత్ అనంగానికి అంతుకే పోయింది.

భక్తులవల్ల బాబా భావన ఎలా ఉండేదో ఈ వాక్యాలు స్పష్టపరుస్తవి. "నేవకులకు నేవయడను. మీకు ఋణపడి ఉన్నాడను. మీ దర్శన భాగ్యంతో తృప్తి కలిగింది. మీ పాదాలను చూడగలగడం మహాభాగ్యం. నేను పురీషములో శ్రమిని. నేను చాలా అదృష్టవంతుణ్ణి." అటు వంటి మహోన్నత స్థితి నందుకున్న నద్గురువు ఆ మహనీయుడు.

ఇలా ఈ మహనీయుని జీవిత విశేషాలలో పెక్కింటిని సోదాహరణంగా వివరిస్తూ బెంగుళూరులో శ్రీ సమాజంలో ఈ మాసా రంభంలో జరిగిన సభలో, బెంగుళూరు నమీషావగల చెన్నపట్నంలో జరిగిన సభలో, వారివి ఇక్కడ మళాలో దర్శనం చేసుకో వచ్చిన పెక్కుమంది భక్తులతో ప్రసంగ చళాత్తు పిర్మీ సాయిబాబా దూతగా పరిగణింపబడే దుద్రాసు షేఖర్ సగర్ శ్రీ సాయిబాబా భక్త సమాజ వ్యవస్థాపక అధ్యక్షులు స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ చెప్పిన అంశాలను మరి కొంత వివరంగా ఈ సమీక్షలో పొందు పరచడం జరిగింది.

భక్తునకు, శిష్యునకు గల తేడాను గురించి స్వామీజీ వివరిస్తూ బాబా సళరీరదారులై ఉన్న రోజులలో ఆయనకు నేవచేసి, ఆయన సాన్నిధ్యాన్ని ఉన్నవారు ఆ మహనీయుని శిష్యులని చెప్పుకొనే వీలున్నదని, మహాసమాధి అనంతరం చాలా కాలానికి 1989లో బాబా ప్రత్యక్షమై ఆ మహనీయుని కార్యక్రమాన్ని సాగించేందుకు నియుక్తుడనైన తాను బాబా భక్తుడను మాత్రమేనని నొక్కి వక్కాణిస్తూ ఉంటారు.

భక్త తుకారాం, భక్త ప్రహ్లాద, రామదాసు, జ్ఞానదేవ్ మున్నగు మహనీయులంతా మానవాళికి ఉత్తమ మార్గం చూపి తరింప చేయడానికి అవతరిస్తూ వచ్చారని, అట్టి మహర్షుల, మహనీయుల కోవకు చెందిన వారి, పిర్మీ సాయిబాబా ఒకరిని స్వామీజీ అంటారు. భక్తునికై అట్టి మహాత్తర త్యాగానికైనా భగవంతుడు సిద్ధం కాగలడని విరూపించే అనేక దృష్టాంతరాలు కలవన్నారు. అనాడు ఉగ్ర నరసింహావతారం వద్దకు ఎవరూ వెళ్లి శాంతింప జేయలేని స్థితిలో భక్త ప్రహ్లాదుడు ఒక్కడే ప్రార్థించి, ఎలా శాంతింప జేసింది గుర్తించా లన్నారు. భక్తులవల్ల

అట్టి అవ్యాజ్య ప్రేమ వాత్సల్యాలను భగవంతుడు చూపు తాడు. అదే రీతిగా భక్తులకై బాబా చేయని త్యాగం, పని లేదని పదేపదే చెబుతాడు.

సాయిబాబా జాతి, మత, కుల, వర్గ, వర్ణభేదాలను, తర తమ భేదాలను పాటించేవాడు కాదు. అందరివల్ల నమ భావంతో వ్యవహరించేవాడు. వారి దూతగా వ్యవహరించే మహద్భాగ్యం కలిగిన స్వామీజీ తమను సందర్శించవచ్చిన వారిని అదరించి, అప్యాయతతో వారి కష్టాలను తీర్చడానికి బాబా కృపకై ప్రార్థిస్తూ అట్టి మహత్తర లక్ష్యంతో, మహోన్నత దృక్పథంతో పనిచేస్తున్నారన్న భావం వారిని సందర్శించిన ప్రతి ఒక్కరికి కలగక మానదు. ఒక రోజున బెంగళూరులోని శ్రీ సాయిబాబా భక్తనమాజ ప్రముఖులతో ఇద్దరు ఆటోరిక్ష డ్రైవర్లు స్వామీజీ సందర్శనానికి వచ్చారు. వారిలో ఒకరికి ఆశీర్వాదనాలతో పది రూపాయల నోటును

ఇస్తూ “ఇది జాగ్రత్తగా ఉంచుకో. మళ్ళీ వచ్చే సంవత్సరం నాటికి స్వంతంగా ఆటోను సంపాదించుకొని, నడుపు కొంటావు” అని అన్నారు. రెండో అతనికి అయిదు రూపాయల నోటును ఇస్తూ “నీకు ఒక దురలవాటు ఉన్నది. అందుకు డబ్బు వెచ్చిస్తావు. ఈ నోటుని భద్రంగా ఉంచు కొని ఆ దురలవాటును మానుకుంటే, ఏడాది నాటికి నీవూ స్వంతంగా ఆటో సంపాదించుకొని సుఖంగా జీవిస్తావు” అని ఆశీర్వాదించారు. ఇలాంటి సంఘటనలు కొల్లలుగా వుంటవి. స్వామీజీతో పరిచయం గల ప్రతి ఒక్కరి ఆను భవాలు ఇందుకు భిన్నంగా ఉంటవనిగావి. పిర్మీ సాయిబాబా కృపకు పాత్రులు కావడానికి తరతమ భేదాలుగావి. జాతి, మత, కుల, వర్గ, వర్ణభేదాలుగావి అడ్డువస్తవనిగావి, వారి వారి ఇష్టదైవాలను, గురువులను విస్మరించి ప్రవర్తించ వలసిన అగత్యం కలదనిగావి ఎవరూ తలపోయ వీలు కాదంటే అతిశయోక్తి ఏమీ లే దనిపిస్తుంది.

(ఆంధ్రప్రభ సౌజన్యంతో)

‘హరిదాసులకు పూజ లావరించిన చాటు
హరిని పూజ, సేతుననే యహ మదేటికే.’

— రామదాసు చరిత్ర

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(1) గురజాడ గోపాలకృష్ణ

“యదా యదా హి ధర్మస్య ధ్వానికృతః కారకః ।
అభ్యుత్థాన మధర్మస్య తదాత్మాం శక్యం బ్రహ్మణామ్ ॥
పరిత్రాణాయ సాధూణాం బహుభూతాం తదాత్మనామ్ ॥
ధర్మ సంస్థాపనార్థాయ సంభూతానాం జనానామ్ ॥”

అవగమము, అభ్యుత్థానము, అనతిరించిన అద్భుతమూర్తి పేరికి సోతవో, అప్పుడు దుష్టశిక్షలు విష్ణుకళాలోకం తాను అవతరిస్తూ ఉంటానని కృష్ణ భూత్యధగు స్థితలో వాడిన విషయం అక్షరాలా నిజమని యుగయుగాలుగా విరూపిత మవుతూ వస్తున్న పరమ పర్యం. ఇక అనేక క్షేత్రాలకు లోను అయి బాగితెచ్చు గానది లనోద్ధరణే ప్రధాన లక్ష్యంగా పరమేశ్వరుని దూతయూ భువన విప్యే మహద్భూత మహావీర్యులూ న్యవహరిస్తూ వస్తున్న అనేక వాదనల దీక్ష తాలను తరిది చూచిన వాటి తీరి తెల్లని కావడం తత్వం. ప్రతి ఒక్కరు ఆత్మసాక్షాత్కానానికి తీవ్రప్రయత్న చేయడమే జీవిత పరమార్థమని ఉద్ఘోషించాలన్నీ హెచ్చరిస్తూ వస్తున్నవి. ఈ మహాత్మర లక్ష్యసాధనకు జ్ఞాన, కర్మ, భక్తి మార్గాలను ఏనాడో పూర్వము విధేయించారు. అందుచో జ్ఞానమార్గం కడు దుర్లభం, ఇక కర్మయోగం కూడా లభించకొద్దీ మంచికే సాధ్యం. చిరంతరం ప్రాపంచిక విషయాలలో మునిగి తేలుతూ ఉండే సామాన్యులందరికీ భక్తి మార్గం ఒక్కటే తరబోపాయంగా కనిపిస్తుంది. ఈ కలియుగంలో ఇంతదంటే మరొక ఉత్తమమైన, ముఖ్యమైన మార్గం లేదని విజ్ఞులు చెబుతున్నారు. ఈ యుగ ప్రభావం ఎటువంటిదో చూచాయగా తెలుసుకోయత్నించడం నమంచితమే నవిపిస్తుంది. కృష్ణ విరాణ నమయంలో ధర్మరాజు తనకు పొడచూపిన దుర్నిమిత్రాలకు చింతిస్తూ—

పీ॥ ఒకకాలమునఁ బండునోపధీవయము పే
రొకకాలమున బండకుండునంద్రు
క్రోధంబు లోభంబుఁ గ్రూరత బొంతును
దీపింప నరులు వర్తింతు రంద్రు
వ్యవహారములు మహావ్యాజయుక్తములంద్రు
నఖ్యంబు నంచనా నహితమంద్రు

మహావీర్యులైన దుష్టశిక్షకులంద్రు,
మహావీర్యులైన దేవజాతులంద్రు
తే॥ మౌనం బుద్ధిగా మహావీర్యులంద్రు,
అత్యంత శక్తిగా లెక్కయే జరుగరంద్రు
అంతా భక్తిగా భావించి నడవరంద్రు,
నాలగనని అద్భుతమైన గంటనేడు.

(మహా భాగవతం

అని భీష్మనితో అంటాడు. ఆ తర్వాత అర్జునుడు ద్వారక నుంచి వచ్చి కృష్ణనిర్యాణాన్ని గురించి చెప్పి చివరకు—“శ॥ ఏదిగమున వైకుంఠము, మేదివిపై చార్మి నట్టిచూచి నిడివినదా చివమున నకుభ్రమతి, పాదికమగు కలియుగము ప్రోక్షంబయ్యెన్” అని అంటాడు. ఆ క్షణం లోనే ధర్మరాజు “పీ॥ గలిప ర్తనంబున గ్రౌర్యహింసా నత్య దంభకౌటిల్యాన్య ధర్మవయము పురముల గృహ ముల భూముల చివరన గణగుట దలబోసి....” అని మహా మునుషికి రాజ్యం అప్పగించి మహా ప్రస్థానానికి వెళతాడు.

అలాంటిమని గానురాను ఈ యుగంలో భౌతికవాదం బాగా ప్రబలమౌతూ రావడం, ధర్మమార్గాలను జనం దూరం అగుతూ రావడం జగద్వైకమే. అయినా కాలానుగుణంగా ధర్మోద్ధరణకై, పతిత జనోద్ధరణకై మహర్షులు, మహా పీయులు అంతరిస్తూనే ఉంటున్నారు. జ్ఞానదేవ్, నామదేవ్, ఏకనాథ్, రుక్మాచారి, రామదాస్ మున్నగు మహా భక్తాగ గణ్యులు చారిత్రి జీవన విధానంద్వారా ఉదాత్తమైన ధార్మిక జీవన ప్రాముఖ్యాన్ని గురించి ఎలుగెత్తి చాటుతూ, నమ్మద యులకు మార్గదర్శకులవుతూ వస్తున్నారు. ఇది 1918వరకూ పోరీరులుగా ఉంటూ వచ్చిన పీర్లీ సామాజిక మహిమా వివిత జీవితాన్ని గురించి చెప్పడానికి నాలాటి సామాన్యుడు సాహసించడం క్షంతవ్యం కాదనిపిస్తుంది. అయితే ఆ మహావీర్యుని కృపద్వారా నా పరిమిత జ్ఞానానికి అందిన విషయాలను తోటి భక్తకోటికి అందజేయ యత్నించడానికి లభించిన ఈ మహాదనకాళాన్ని నద్వినియోగ పడుచుకొని

కృతకృత్యుణ్ణి కానాలని అనివదం తగనివని కాదని తల
పొస్తున్నాను

1918 అక్టోబర్ 15 విజయదశమినాడు సాయుబాబా
మహా సమాధి పొందారు మహాసమాధి అనంతరం కూడా
ఆ మహానీయుని కృప, రక్ష అశేష భక్తకోటికి లభిస్తూ
అన్న సంకయం అయిన సళరీరులుగా ఉండగానే కొండ
రికి కలగడం సాయుబాబా వారి భయనందేహాలను తొల
గిస్తూ "ఈ భౌతిక దేహాన్ని విడిచి వెళ్ళిన తర్వాత కూడా
మరింత వైభవ్య వంతంగా శక్తి వంతంగా వ్యవహరిస్తు
ఉంటాను—ఎవరైతే నా శరణు వేడుతారో వారి వందరినీ
నా సమాధి అశీర్వాదించి, మాట్లాడుతుంది నా మహా
సమాధి అనంతరం కూడా ఎక్కడైనా వరే నన్ను తల
చిన క్షణంలోనే మీతో ఉంటాను" అని వాగ్దానం చేశారు
ఈ సవిశ్రవాణి అక్షరాలా నిజమని ఈ వాటికి భక్తకోటికి
విరూపిత మవుతూనే ఉన్న విషయం అనుభవజ్ఞు లందరికీ
తెలిసిందే పెక్కుమంది మహానీయుల జీవన విధానాలతో
బోల్చి చూస్తే, ఈ మహర్షి జీవన పద్ధతులలోనే ఒక వి
శ్వక గోచరిస్తుంది తేవలం జనసామాన్యాన్ని ఉద్ధరింప
డానికి అనవిస్తే అవతరించినా ఉనిపించే ఈ మహర్షి
సత్తముడు, ప్రజల జీవితావసరాలవల్ల ముందుగా తగు
క్రద్ధ వహించి, వారిలో భక్తి ప్రవక్తులను క్రమేపీ పెంప
డం ద్వారా వారి దృష్టిని తగవంతునివైపు, దార్మిక జీవ
నం వైపు మరల్చడానికి ఎవరేని కృషి చేస్తు వస్తున్నా
డన్న పరమ వత్సం విజ్ఞులకు గోచరింపక తప్పదు
అందుకే కరుణార్ధం హృదయాలైన ఈ పరమపూజన
మూర్తి "నా భక్తుల ఇళ్ళలో ఆసరానికి, బట్టలకు
ఎన్నడూ లోపము ఉండదు ఎరి మనస్సులను నాలోనే
లగ్నంచేసి ఎవరైతే హృదయ పూర్వకంగా నన్ను ఆరా
ధిస్తారో ఆ భక్తుల యోగక్షేమాలవల్ల నేను ఎల్లప్పుడూ
శ్రద్ధ వహించి, అన్ని విధాలా అదుకోవడమే నా ప్రత్యేక
లక్షణం అని ఎలుగెత్తి చాటుతాడు గీతలో కూడా
కృష్ణుడు చెప్పిన విషయం ఇదే సర్వమతాల సారాన్ని అక
లింపు చేసుకుని మతసామరస్య సాధనకై తదిక దీక్షతో
కూడా కృషిచేసిన మహనోత్తముడన్న విషయాన్ని ఎరీలో
ఏకసమయంలో జరుగుతూ వచ్చిన ఉర్స్, శ్రీరమనవని
ఉత్సవాభి ప్రజల విదర్శన సువినిస్తుంది తననే దైవంగా
ఆరాధించమని ఆ యుపిశంకపుడు ఎన్నడూ చెప్పలేదని,
ఎవరి ఇష్టదేవతలకు వారు సక్రమంగా, సరిపూర్ణమైన
విశ్వాసంతో భక్తి ప్రవక్తులతో ఆరాధిస్తూ జీవిత లక్ష్యన్ని
సాధించడానికి అన్ని విధాలా తోడ్పడుతూ వచ్చారని ఆ
మహానీయుని జీవితం తెలుపుతుంది మహోన్నత కులాల
నందు తన్ను మహానీయుల శ్రేణిలో ఈ యోగి పుంగవు

నికి ఒక విశ్వ స్థానం కలదని రుజువు చేయడానికి,
సామాన్య లందరికీ అందుబాటులో ఉన్నారని నొక్కి
వర్కాణించడానికి కోరిల్లులుగా మనకు ఎన్నో దృష్టాంత
రాలు లభిస్తవి తన శక్తి యుక్తుల ద్వారా నే
రకుండా సహా సమాధి అనంతరం తాను ఎందుకున్న
దూతల ద్వారా కూడా భక్తకోటి సముద్ధరణకై ఎవరేని
కృషి చేస్తున్నా రనడానికి ప్రజల తార్కాణం స్వామి
తేవయ్యజీ జీవితమేనని అనుభవం కలిగిన ప్రతి ఒక్క
రికీ స్పష్టంకాక తప్పదు

1918ని సంవత్సరం జాలై ఒకటవ రేదిన స్వామిజీకి
శ్రీ సాయుబాబా దర్శనం ఇచ్చి తన కృపను ప్రజలకు
అందజేయడానికి ఒక సాధనగా తమారు చేశారు శ్రీ
సాయుబాబా తన దూతగా ఆయన్ను ఎన్నుకోడానికి సము
చిత క రణాలు ఆయన జీవితాన్ని తరిది చూచిన వారికి
గోచరిస్తవి శ్రీ సాయుబాబా కృపవల్ల నేను పిద్దుడను
అయ్యాను అని 'ప్రతిగా నానా కృపవల్ల దయవల్ల
జరుగుతుంది అని స్వామిజీ తనను సందర్శించే భక్తులం
దరికీ సదేవదే చెబుతూ ఉంటారు, జీవిత సమస్యలతో
సతమతమయే అనేక నుండి ఆకాశోత్తి స్వామిజీ ఆయన
వాణి దివ్యవాణిగా పెక్కుమందికి ఎనిచేయడం అనుభవైక
వేద్యమే ఈ పరమ పూజ్యుని సందర్శనం చేసుకొనే
మహాద్వార్యం నాకు నుమారు ఆరున్నర సంగత్పరాలకు
పూర్వం తొలిసారిగా వెంగుళుడు హెన్ ఎమ్ టి రాల
నీలో ఆంధ్రప్రభ ప్రస్తుత సంపాదకులు శ్రీ పండితా
రాధ్యుల నాగేశ్వర రావుగారి ద్వారా కలిగివడన వ్రాయడం
ఈ సందర్భంలో అనుచితం కాదని భావిస్తున్నాను అనాటి
నుంచి నా జీవితంలో ఒక సరికొత్త అధ్యాయం ప్రారంభ
మైందని సగర్వంగా చెప్ప గలను నా నా కుటుంబ
వత్కులకు వంబించిందిన పెక్కు జటిల సమస్యలను వారి
అశీర్వాదవ బలంవల్ల బాబా కృపవల్ల పరిష్కరించుకొంటూ
ముందుకు పోతున్నానని చెప్పడానికి సాహసస్తున్నాను
స్వామిజీ వెంగుళుడుకు వచ్చినప్పుడు అనేకమంది భక్తుల
వారి ద్వారా బాబా కృపకు పాత్రులై పెక్కు ఎల
ప్రయోజనాలను పొంద గలుగుతున్నారని అంటే ఆకృర్య
వదవలంది ఏమీ ఉండదు అతిశయోక్తి అంకకన్నా
కాబోదు

ఈ సందర్భంగా నాకు కలిగిన ఒక అతి ప్రధానమైన
అనుభూతిని ఇటు పొందునరుస్తూ ఉడుతాభక్తిగా నేను
వ్రాయ తలపెట్టిన ఈ వ్యాసాన్ని ముగిస్తాను

దాదాపు రెండున్నర దశాబ్దాలుగా నా భార్య అరోగ్యం
అంతంతగా ఉంటూ ఉండేది మామూలు నియ్యం పాలు
కొబ్బరి, గోధుమి ఏ మాత్రం వచ్చేవి కాదు అని ఉనే

అప్పుటి తేనాంతులుదానడంకలసోప్పియన్నగువాదలువచ్చేవి. దంపుడు నియంత్రము. మౌనపాఠు వలచిన నియంత్రమో వాడవలసి వచ్చేది. ఎక్కడికి వెళ్లాలన్నా ఈ రకం నియంత్రం కూడా కట్టుకుంటే తప్పుపలసి వచ్చేది. అక్కడ దొడగలలోనే వస్తులు వడంకోవడం కూడా జరిగేది. అమె లింగి ఒక పెద్ద గడ్డు నమనస్థుగా ఆయాచెంది. ఎన్ని రకాల వైద్యులూ చేసివా ప్రయోజనం లేకపోయింది. ఏమీ చేయలేనని నైదులు కూడా చెప్పారు. ఈ అధునిక యుగంలో మామూలు నియంత్రం అవీ వాడకుండా డీవింకడం కష్టమవుతుందేమోనన్న నీతి నా మనస్సులో కొడచూపింది. మార్గం ఏమిటా అని మధనపడేవాణ్ణి. స్వామిశేఖరయ్యజీని మేము వందర్పింకడం జరిగిన గర్వాత్, ఈమె తిండి నమనస్థ విషయం చెప్పి కరణోపాయంకోసం అర్థించాను. మూడేళ్ళ పాటు ఆధ్యాత్మిక సంబంధమైన కొన్ని ప్రక్రియలను చేసి

మోడనున్నారే. చిట్టచివరకు ఏడాది క్రితం మామూలు నియంత్రం. కొద్దిరి మున్నగు వడని వదాల్తాలను కొద్దిగా నానా కూర్చి వేసుకొని తనయని. ఏమీ తేడా చేయడం చెప్పారు. ౧౨ ప్రకారం చేయడం జరిగింది. దాదాపు నాలుగు నెలల క్రితం పాటు కూడా వాడవట్టి నన్నారే. ఇప్పుడు ఈ వదాల్తాల నన్నిటిని స్వేచ్ఛగా వాడుతూ రుచాపాగా ఉంటూ ఉన్నది. ప్రతి మూడూ నానాను, స్వామిశేఖరయ్యజీని స్మరిస్తూ రాలం గలవుటూ ఉంది. ఈ విషయాలన్నీ మా తులులబంగలో నన్నిహిత సంబంధంకల వారందరికీ తెలిప న్నామి. అమె డీవికంలో వచ్చిన మార్పును చూచిన వారంతా అశ్చర్యభోతులై ఉంటారు. నిజంగా అమె మరొక జన్మ ఎత్తునట్లే వదిలిస్తుంది. సాయిబాబా, స్వామిశేఖరయ్యజీనిలకు కృతజ్ఞులూ మార్వర ప్రణామము లర్పిస్తూ నిరంతరం వారి అశీర్వాదాలకై ప్రార్థిస్తున్నాం.

‘భక్త దేందు జనిన బలతెంతు వెనువెంట
గోవు వెంట దగులు కోడెకంగి.’

—మోతన

మ ద రా స . తో వె ల న న పి ర్తి

డాక్టర్ చల్లా రాధాకృష్ణశర్మ

సర్వాంతర్యామి అయిన ఆ భగవంతుడు సర్వము దీక్షింపఁబడి, భక్తవత్సలుడని మన ప్రభాత విశ్వాసం. ఆ విశ్వాసం విన్న మొన్నటిది కాదు. యుగ యుగాలూ, సర్వకాలాలూ ప్రచారంలో ఉన్న విశ్వాస మిది. కనుక 'సేవం' ప్రాణ విందిన మహా భక్తులూ, మహాత్ములూ ఇది పరమా సత్యమని స్పష్టం చేశారు, భవ మహిమల వ్యాపి. విజయనాథుడు. భక్తి మార్గం ముక్తి సాధనకు సోపానం. భక్తిని ఎదిగ మించగల మార్గం మరొకటి లేదన్నది. అది అతిశయోక్తి కాదు, కాశాలదు కూడా.

కర్మ, జ్ఞానములు కూడా మోక్షమునకు దారి ఏదీలే అయినప్పటికీ. అవి అందరికీ అందుబాటులో ఉండవు. వందితులకు మాత్రమే ప్రీతి పాత్రము లవి. కాని భక్తి మార్గం అటువంటిది కాదు. అది వందిత సామర్యంకేం. భక్తి కలుగువాడు మైదువుడైనా సరే. అతడు మైదువుడు కాదు. అతడు బ్రాహ్మణోత్తముడు, వందితుడు, ముని శ్రేష్ఠుడు—అవి గూడ పురాణంలోని యీ శ్రింది క్లోకం వల్ల విదిత మవుతున్నది.

భక్తి రత్నవిధా 'హృషికేశ్వరీ' మైదొంగి పక్షి న విశ్రేంధ్రో ముని. శ్రీమాన్ స యతః స త

వందితః.

పైగా, విశ్వలయైన భక్తి ద్వారా జ్ఞానవంశమునైన మనవుడెవర జ్ఞానవిహీనమైన జంతువుల పైతల భగవంతుని దర్శించగలిగినట్లు రామాయణంలోని ఉడుర తత శ్రీ కాళహస్తి కైత్ర కరిత్ర మొదలైనవి స్పష్టం చేస్తున్నవి. ఆ కృతిలో చాలా దిక్కులే అయినా, విశ్వలయైన భక్తితో, మనస్సుల్లిగా, భక్తివంశన లేకుండా సహాయం చేసి ఉడుత రామకందుని ప్రేమను మారగొన గలిగింది. ఉడుత చేసిన సహాయం ఏ పాటిది? అని కాదు ప్రశ్న. అది ప్రదర్శించిన భక్తి భావం విచిత్రమానం. ఆ భక్తి భావానికి రాముడు తస్మయ్యై దానిని ఆశీర్వదించాడు.

దూర్బల మహాశక్తి తన కాళహస్తి శతకంలో వదువు నందెలు నిరర్థకములని. భగవత్పాదసేవయే మోక్షసాధనకు

రాజమార్గం అని మనస్సుని హత్తుకొనేలా చెప్పిన యీ పద్యం వదిలిపెట్టండి:

"ఏ నీదంబు వదిలె లూట, భుజగంజే లాస్త్రహంట్ నూడె, ఆ

నే విద్యావ్యవసరం మోసర్పుకరి. కెండ్లెనంట్ల నూహించె, ఖో

ధావిద్యావనిదానముల్ వదుపుల. మ్యా కాపు, మీ పాదపల సేవాన క్రిమి కాక ఇంతుతదికిన్ శ్రీకాళహస్తి శ్రీకృష్ణం."

నేటికి మూడు వందల ఏగడ్డలు మునుపు వివసించిన మహానీయుడూ, సంస్కృత ద్రావిడ భాషాభిజ్ఞుడూ అయిన తాయామానవర్ 'విదై ముక్తి తరుమా' (విద్య ముక్తి నొసగుచూ) అని చూటిగా ప్రశ్నించాడు. గాయత బ్రహ్మ అయిన త్యాగయ్య భక్తివిహీనంగిర జ్ఞానము విష్ణులమని తుండ బ్రద్దలు కొట్టినట్లు స్పష్టంగా పేర్కొన్నాడు.

"విష్ణు భక్తిలేవి విలుదుండు విలుదుడే పాదయుగముతోడి వళుపుగాక...."

అని పోతన వివరణిస్తాడూ.

"భక్తి కలుగునాడె పరమార్థపరుడయూ"

"భక్తి కలుగు చూడు వట్టెదైనను చాణ"

అని వేమన పంటి మానపతా వాడి మొదలైన మహా నీయులు భక్తికి గల ప్రాధాన్యమును చక్కగా వివ రించారు.

అంతే కాదు; భగవదారాధన తంతు భగవద్భక్తులను సేవించడమే ఎంతో సలకడ మని కూడా మన పెద్దలు పేర్కొన్నారు. కారణం. భగవంతుడు భక్తవరాధీసుడు. భక్తులకు వకుడైనట్లుగా, భగవంతుడు ఇతరులకు వళు వడుడు కాదు. కనుకనే, తిక్కములలో క్రుంకు లిరుగుకంటే, భగవద్భక్తుని పాదజలమును కరకున చికిరించుకోవడం భక్తద మని మన మహాశక్తులు భావించారు. శ్రీకృష్ణుని

క్షీర్తనము, స్మరణము, పాదసేవ, అర్చనము, వందనము, దావ్యము, సన్మయము, అత్మనివేదనము... అనే యీ వన విధముల ద్వారా భగవంతుని ఆరాధించడం నుంచినది నానించారు. వేదశాస్త్రాలైన నారాయణాంకలూ, విష్ణు భక్తులైన అశ్వామలూ, రామదాసు వంటి వరకు భక్తులూ మొదలైన వారూ ఈ విధంగానే భగవంతుని ఆరాధించి దస్యజీవులయినారు.

మన దేశంలో అవతరించిన అవతార పురుషులలో ప్రముఖులు భగవాన్ శ్రీ సాయినాథ భక్తుల పాలిటి కొంగు బంగారం. ఆయన ప్రవచనాలు ఉన్నత బాత్మిక రహస్యాల, మానవసేవయే మార్గమేనని మహా తరమైన మార్గమని ఆయన దివ్య సందేశం. అధ్యాత్మికత అనేది ఎక్కడో సుమారుంగా లేదనీ, అది మానవుని మనస్సులోనే అణగి మణిగి పుట్టడమే ఆయన దర్శనం. మొత్తం మీద ఆ మహాత్ముని ప్రవచనములు తరణోపాయములే కాక ఆ చరణయోగ్యములు కూడా.

అయితే, మనస్సులో భక్తి స్థిరంగా ఉదురుకోవాలంటే, అందుకు మనస్సుని భగవంతుని మీద శేంద్రీకరించాలి. మనస్సు వరికుద్రంగా ఉండాలి. మనసు నిల్చు భక్తిలేక పోతే, మధుర ఫలం విరుల పూజ లేమి చేయును? అని త్యాగరాజు మాటిగా ప్రశ్నించారు. మనస్సుని భగవంతుని మీద నిలిపవచ్చుదే. అనగా భక్తి భావం వెలకొన్నప్పుడే, భగవత్ పాశ్చాత్కారం మగమ మవుతుంది. చిత్తశుద్ధి లేని భవపూజ లేరని అనీ, అత్మశుద్ధి లేని అవార మదియేలా అనీ వేమన అత్మశుద్ధికి గల వైశిష్ట్యమును తెన్నగా తెలియ జేశారు. నిజమునకు, అత్మశుద్ధికి భక్తి అని నా భావ సంబంధ మున్నది. అత్మ శుద్ధిలేని భక్తి భావం వాసన లేని పువ్వు వంటిది. ఆ కోవకు చెందిన భక్తి కేవలం అడవిని రంగా వరిణమించవచ్చు.

కనుకనే భక్తి పూర్వకంగా భగవన్నామం ఉచ్చరిస్తే చాలు, అది కుఠోదర్శ మని శ్రీ సాయినాథా పేర్కొన్నారు. తొలిరవాదం పెచ్చు పెరిగిపోతున్న యీ రోజుల్లో తరణోపాయమునకు ఇంతకంటే మించిన మంచి మార్గం మరొకటి కనిపించదు.

1918 లో శ్రీ సాయినాథా మహా సమాధి వందనా, ఆ మహావీయుని అమూల్య ప్రవచనాలను శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ వంటి భక్తులు ప్రచారం చేస్తున్నారు. భగవద్భక్తి, వైదిక దృష్టి క్రమక్రమంగా తగ్గుముఖం పడుతున్న యీ సాక్షిలో నాథా ప్రవచనాలకు గల ప్రాధాన్యం ఇంతా అంతా అని చెప్పలేము.

శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ కృపాసిద్ధి పొందిన భక్తులు.

మంత్రాలూ తంత్రాలూ అయినా తెలియవు. తెలిసిందల్లా నానా ఉపదేశాన్ని పొందినది వందపెట్టడమే. నానా ఉపదేశ సుధారవంతో తా ను వారే ఆయన వినర్థ సుందర ప్రసంగం శ్రోతలను అనాయాసంగా అకట్టు కుంటుంది. పైకి కనిపించని మహిమాన్వితుల! ఆయన ప్రతి గురువారం మదరాసులో పెనాయ్ నగరలోని సాయి నిలయంలో జరిపే నానా పూజను తిలకించడానికి, తమ వాదలకు నివారణోపాయములను తెలుసుకోడానికి ఎందరెందరో అక్కడికి వస్తూ వుంటారు. మదరాసు, తత్పరి నరాల నుంచే కాక దూర ప్రాంతాల నుంచి కూడా వస్తూ వుంటారు. వారందరి కష్టసుఖాలు తనుకొని, వారికి నానా ప్రసాదమైన 'ఉధి'ని (విభూతి) ఇచ్చి, ఆయన నడుము వాల్చేనరికి రాత్రి పన్నెండూ, ఒంటి గంటా అవుతూ వుంటుంది.

దక్షిణాదిలో నానా ప్రవచనాలను ప్రచుర ప్రచారం చేసిన ప్రముఖులూ నానా భక్తులూ ఆయన శ్రీ నరసింహ స్వామిజీ 1945 లో స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీని గురించి చెప్పిన మాటలు ఇక్కడ ఉదాహరించదగినవి. '....శ్రీ సాయి నానా కరుణాకటాక్షం వల్ల తనకు కొన్ని మహాత్ములు అలవడినా, తాను మాత్రం సాయినాథా కానని శ్రీ కేశవయ్య గారు స్పష్టంగా చెప్పారు. ఆయన విశ్రమక, సౌజన్యం, సత్యసంధత మొదలైనవి ఎంతైనా ప్రశంసించదగినవి...' నరసింహస్వామిగారి మాటలు అతియోక్తులు కావు; పై పెచ్చు సత్యసంపూర్ణములు.

శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ అధ్వర్యంలో మదరాసులో శ్రీ సాయినాథ భక్త సమాజం ఏర్పడింది. సాయి నిలయంలో గురువారం జరిగే పూజను తిలకించడానికి వచ్చే భక్తుల సంఖ్య ఎక్కువ కావడం, వారికి తగిన వదు పాఠములు లేకపోవడం, శ్రీరామనవమి గురుపూర్ణిమ మొదలైన వాటిని స్మరస్కరించుకుని జరుపటదే నిసారంగ వఖిలకు తగిన సభాస్థలి లేకపోవడం.... ఈ కారణాలను దృష్టిలో ఉంచుకుని సాయి నిలయమునకు అభిముఖంగా ఉన్న స్థలంలో శ్రీ సాయినాథా మందిరమునూ ప్రార్థనా మండపమునూ నిర్మించాలని సమాజం వారు నిర్ణయించారు. అంతే; ఎక్కడెక్కడి భక్తులూ, పిన్నలూ పెద్దలూ, పేదలూ, దనికులూ యథోచిత రీతిని విరాళాలు అందజేశారు. మూడు మూడు లక్షల రూపాయల వ్యయంతో ఈ బృహద్విరూపం సుప్రసిద్ధ వాస్తుశాస్త్రజ్ఞుడు శ్రీ టి. కె. గోవిందరావు వర్యవేక్షణలో తయారయింది. ముద్దులు మూటగడుతున్న యీ మనిషిల మందిరంలో ఒకే సమయంలో మూడు పేరమంది హాయిగా కూర్చో

వచ్చి. ప్రార్థనా మందిరంలో విశ్రాంతంగా ప్రార్థన చేసుకోవచ్చు. ప్రకాశంతో తోపిందిన మడరాసు వంటి మహా నగరంలో ఇటువంటి మందిరం భక్తులకు నరప్రసాదం వంటిదన్నా సాహసం కాదు; అనేకం. శ్రీ బాబా భక్తుల విడి వనిత్ర యాత్రా స్థలం.

రెన్నవట్టబాన్ని రెండవ పిర్రగా తీర్చిదిద్దిన ఘనత శ్రీసాయిబాబా భక్తసమాజం వారికి దక్కింది. సమాజం స్థాపక—అధ్యక్షులు శ్రీ స్వామి శేషవయ్యగారి వారసులు, ఆయన విద్వరాసుల కృపి లంగరులక్షణాలతో లభించగలిగింది.

మందిరం విరూపాక్షంలో ఉన్న రోజులలో అరిగిన ఒక సంపుటన : యం. యస్. ప్రియసాయి ప్రముఖ దాక్షిణ్యగా పేరు తెంపులు గడించిన బాబా భక్తుడు ఒకాయన మంది రాన్ని చూస్తూ ఇలా అనుకున్నాడు. "ఈ మందిరం కోసం

స్వామిగారి అహర్నిశలూ ఎంతో కష్టపడుతున్నారని గదా.... స్వామిగారి భద్రనంతరం ఏమవుతుందో యోచించుకో...." అని. ఆ రాత్రి ఆ దాక్షిణ్యగారికి ఒక కల వచ్చింది. బాబా కలలో కనిపించి, "పిచ్చివాడా! ఈ మందిరం విడిచిపెట్టి నే వెక్కడికి వెళ్తాను. మందిరంలోనే వుండి నా భక్తుల్ని రక్షించుకుంటాను" అంటూ భక్తుల పాలిటి పొంగి లంగరమైన బాబా మందిరంలోకి వెళ్లి, అక్కడ అసేను లై నారాడు.

శ్రీ సాయి మహిమానియులైన స్వామి శేషవయ్యగారి కనువన్నులలో చూపలేఖలు వంతరించుకున్న ఈ వనిత్ర మందిరం భక్త కల్పద్రుమమైన శ్రీ సాయిబాబాగారి విలయ మవుతుందని ఆయన పర్యటించిన సర్వానందలలోనూ తన భక్తులను కంటికి రెన్నవలే కాపాడుటో ఉండగలరని చెప్పడం దర్శిత భర్తలమే అవుతుంది.

'ఎందు గలదు విష్ణు, నందు ఆయత్రీలు
మిందుగాగ వచ్చి మిందుచుండు.'

—వింగన



సాయి తత్వ మహిమాన్వితాలు

శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ

కృష్ణ

1949, మే 5 గురువారం సాయం సమయం
అరుగంటలవేళ మదర లలోని పెన్-
నగర్ లో సాయి నిలయం వద్ద సరిగ్గా పదిమంది
క్యాలో నిలబడ్డారు ఆ క్యూరోజులు గడవను
గడవను ఇంతింతై కంటింతయై అన్నట్లు
పెరిగింది

ఒక్క మాటలో చెప్పాలంటే కొండవీటి చేంతా
డయింది

క్యాలో పురుషులు స్త్రీలు ఎన్నలు పెద్దలు
నవనాగరకత మూర్తీభవించు యుగతి యువ
కులు ఇంకా రకరకాలవారు ఒక యుగతి ఎదో
ఒక అఫీసులో పని చేస్తోంది ఆమెకింకా వివాహం
కాలేదు తగిన వరుడు దొరకాలి అదీ ఆమె
దిగులు మరొక యువతికి వివాహమై పదేళ్ళ
యింది కాని సంఘం లేదు ఇంకో ఇల్లానికి అన్నీ
వున్నాయి కానీ లరోగ్యం సరిగా లేదు అదీ ఆమె
మ స్సుని పట్టి ఎల్లారుస్తున్న దిగులు ఎన్నిసార్లు
పరీక్షకు వెళ్ళినా, కృతార్థుడు కాలేదు కాబోలు
దీనంగా కోస్తున్నాడు ఒక యువకుడు ఇలా
ఏవేవో దిగుళ్ళు బాధలూను కాని ఆశ్చర్యం
బాబాను దర్శనం చేసుకుని బయటకు వస్తున్న
వాళ్ళలో అనిర్వచనీయమైన సంతోషం తృప్తి కని
పిస్తున్నాయి నిజంగానే ఆశ్చర్యం కలిగిస్తుంది యీ
దృశ్యం

ఇంటికో మట్టిపోయి అన్నట్టుగా ప్రతివ్యక్తికి
యేదో ఒక అసంతృప్తి ఒక బాధ ఒక దిగులు
ఉంటూనే ఉంటాయి కానీ నివారణోపాయం కని
పించే సరికి, అతనికి ఎక్కడలేని సంతోషం కలుగు

తుంది కొత్త ఉత్సాహం కలుగుతుంది మందు
మాకులవల్ల ఆరోగ్యం కలగవచ్చు కాని మనస్సుకి
నిజమైన తృప్తి వ్యక్తికి నిజమైన ప్రశాంతత
ఆధ్యాత్మిక చింతనవల్ల కలుగుతుందనీ మన
దేశంలో వెలసిన మహాభక్తులూ మొదలైనవారు
లేటతెల్లం చేశారు శ్రీ సాయిబాబా భక్తులైన శ్రీ
స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీ చేసే గురువారపు పూజలను
కనుక తిలకిస్తే యీ విషయం వ్యక్తమౌతుంది
వ్యధి గ్రస్తులూ సంతానం లేని వాళ్ళూ ఎందరో
ఆయన్ని దర్శించిన తర్వాత ఒక విధమైన తృప్తిని
చెందారు

ఈ మధ్య నా మిత్రుడు ఒకాయన మాటల
చంద్రంబో ఇలా అన్నాడు నా భార్య కొన్నే
ళ్ళుగా ఒక చర్మవ్యాధితో బాధ పడేది మందు
లెన్నో యిప్పించాను తాత్కాలికంగా నయమయ్యేది
కొన్నాళ్ళకు తర్వాత చుట్టి మొదలయ్యేది ఒక
రోజు స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీని దర్శించి విషయ
ంతా వివరించాను ఒక గురువారం పూజానంతరం
స్వామిజీ ఆ వ్యధి వున్న చోట చేతితో తడిమి,
ఊది యిచ్చారు చర్మవ్యాధి మాయమైంది ఆ
తర్వాత

స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీలో ఏదో ఒక శక్తి ఉంది
గురువారం పూజ తర్వాతనూ శ్రీరామనవమింటి
ఉత్సవాలు చేసే రోజుల్లోనూ ఆయన పడుకునేసరికి
రాత్రి పన్నెండు దాటుతుంది తన పద్దకు వచ్చే
వందలాది భక్తులకు ఆయన సమాధానాలు చెప్పుతూ
వుంటారు ప్రతిరోజూ భక్తుల జాబులకు జవాబులు
ప్రాస్తూ వుంటారు కాని నేనే బాబాని అని ఆయన

ఎన్నడూ అనలేదు. ఎప్పుడు మాట్లాడినా నేను బాబా భక్తుణ్ణి. నిమిత్తమాత్రుణ్ణి— అని అంటూ వుంటారు. ఇది గొప్ప విషయమని నా అభిప్రాయం. వినయం ఆయనకి వెన్నతో పెట్టిన విద్య. మృదువుగా మాట్లాడడం ఆయనకి జెట్టని భూషణం:

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నీయులూ అయిన శ్రీ నరసింహస్వామి గారు స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీని గురించి ముచ్చటిస్తూ యిలా పేర్కొన్నారు: “అయనలో ఏవో ఆధ్యాత్మిక శక్తులున్నాయి. అయన వినయం, నేవాతత్పరతా కొవ్వొత్తగాననివి.” విరాడంబరంగా, విస్వార్థంగా మానన నేపచేస్తున్న శ్రీ స్వామి కేశవయ్యజీని గురించి యింతకంటే ఎక్కువగా ఏం చెప్పను?

(అంద్రప్రభ సౌజన్యంతో)

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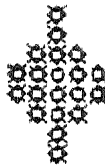
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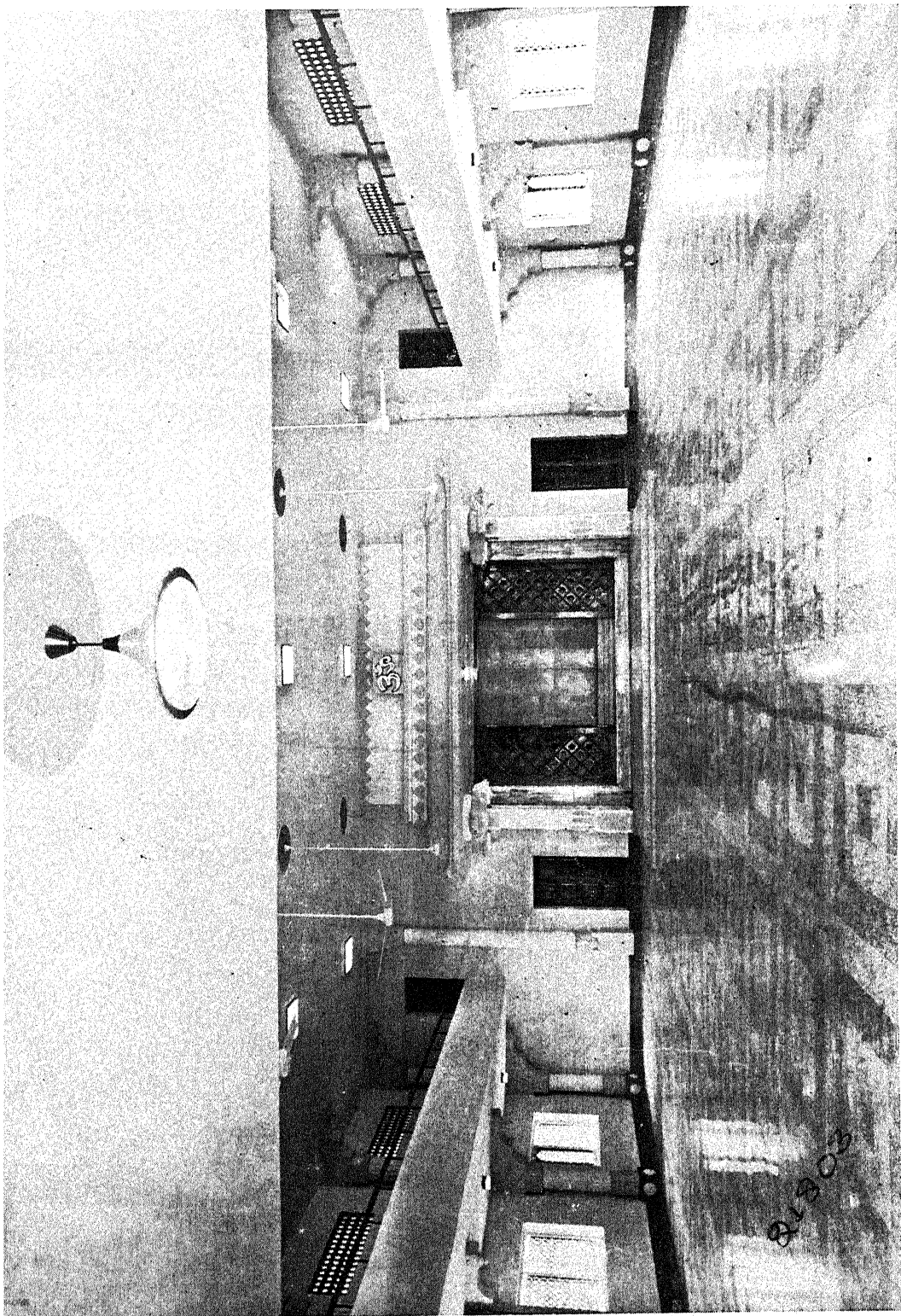
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